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CHAPTER XXI.

JESS GETS A PASS.

About half past ten on the morning following her interview with Hans Coetzee, Jess was at 'The Palatial' as usual, and John was just finishing packing the cart with such few goods as they possessed. There was not much chance of its being of any material use, for he did not in the slightest degree expect that they would get the pass; but, as he cheerfully said, it was as good an amusement as any other.

'I say, Jess,' he sang out presently, 'come here.'

'What for?' answered Jess, who was seated on the doorstep mending something, and looking at her favourite view.

'Because I want to speak to you.'

She got up and went, feeling rather angry with herself for going.

'Well,' she said tartly, 'here I am. What is it?'

'I have finished packing the cart, that's all.'

'And you mean to tell me that you have brought me round here to say that?'

'Yes, of course I have; exercise is good for the young.' And then he laughed, and she laughed too.

It was all nothing—nothing at all—but somehow it was very delightful. Certainly mutual affection, even when unexpressed, has a way of making things go happily, and can find something to laugh at anywhere.

Just then, who should come up but Mrs. Neville, in a great state of excitement, and, as usual, fanning herself with her hat.

'What do you think, Captain Niel? the prisoners have come in, and I heard one of the Boers in charge say that he had a pass signed by the Boer general for some English people, and that he was coming over to see about them presently. Who can it be?'

'It is us,' said Jess quickly. 'We are going home. I saw Hans Coetzee yesterday, and begged him to try and get us a pass, and I suppose he has.'

'My word! going to get out: well, you are lucky! Let me sit down and write a letter to my great-uncle at the Cape. You must post it when you can. He is ninety-four, and rather soft, but I dare say he will like to hear from me,' and she bundled off into the house to give her aged relative (who, by the way, laboured under the impression that she was still a little girl of four years of age) as minute an account of the siege of Pretoria as time would allow.

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'Well, John, you had better tell Mouti to put the horses in. We shall have to start presently,' said Jess.

'Ay,' he said, pulling his beard thoughtfully, 'I suppose that we shall;' adding, by way of an afterthought, 'Are you glad to go?'

'No,' she said, with a sudden flash of passion and a stamp of the foot, and then turned and entered the house again.

'Mouti,' said John to the Zulu, who was lounging around in a way characteristic of that intelligent but unindustrious race, 'inspan the horses. We are going back to Mooifontein.'

'Koos' [chief], said the Zulu unconcernedly, and started on the errand as though it were the most everyday occurrence to drive off home out of a closely beleaguered town. That is another beauty of the Zulu race: you cannot astonish them. They, no doubt, consider that that, to them, extraordinary mixture of wisdom and insanity, the white man, is, as the Agnostic French critic said in despair of the prophet Zerubbabel, 'capable de tout.'

John stood and watched the inspanning absently. The fact was that he, too, was conscious of a sensation of regret. He felt ashamed of himself for it, but there it was; he was sorry to leave the place. For the last week or so he had been living in a dream, and everything outside that dream was blurred and indistinct as a landscape in a fog. He knew the things were there, but he did not quite appreciate their relative size and position. The only real thing was his dream; all else was as vague as those far-off people and events that we lose in infancy and find again in old age.

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And now there would be an end of dreaming; the fog would lift, and he must face the facts. Jess, with whom he had dreamed, would go away to Europe and he would marry Bessie, and all this Pretoria business would glide away into the past like a watch in the night. Well, it must be so; it was right and proper that it should be so, and he for one was not going to flinch from his duty; but he would have been more than human had he not felt the pang of awakening. It was all so very unfortunate.

By this time Mouti had got the horses up, and asked if he was

to inspan.

'No; wait a bit,' said John. 'Very likely it is all rot,' he added to himself.

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when he caught sight of two armed Boers of a peculiarly unpleasant type and rough appearance riding across the veldt towards 'The Palatial' gate, escorted by four carbineers. At the gate they stopped, and one of them dismounted and came up to where he was standing by the stable-door.

'Captain Niel?' he said interrogatively, in English.

'That is my name,'

'Then here is a letter for you;' and he handed him a folded paper.

John opened it—it had no envelope—and read as follows:—

'SIR,—The bearer of this has with him a pass which it is understood that you desire, giving you and Miss Jess Croft a safe conduct to Mooifontein, in the Wakkerstroom district of the Republic. The only condition attached to the pass, which is signed by one of the honourable Triumvirate, is that you must carry no despatches out of Pretoria. Upon your giving your word of honour to the bearer that you will not do this he will hand you the pass.'

This letter, which was fairly written and in good English, had no signature.

'Who wrote this?' asked John of the Boer.

'That is no affair of yours,' was the curt reply. 'Will you pass your word about the despatches?'

'Yes.'

'Good. Here is the pass;' and he handed over that document to John. It was in the same handwriting as the letter, but signed by the Boer general.

John examined it, and then called to Jess to come and translate

it. She was on her way round the corner of the house as he did so, having heard the voice of the Boer.

'It means, "Pass the bearers unharmed," she said, 'and the signature is correct. I have seen the General's signature before.'

'When must we start?' asked John.

'At once, or not at all.'

'I must drive round by the headquarter camp to explain about

my going. They will think that I have run away.'

To this the Boer demurred, but finally, after going to the gate to consult his companion, consented, and the two rode back to the headquarter camp, saying that they would wait for the cart there,

whereupon the horses were inspanned.

In five minutes everything was ready, and the cart was standing in the roadway in front of the little gate. After he had looked to all the straps and buckles, and seen that everything was properly packed, John went to call Jess. He found her standing by the doorsteps, looking out at her favourite view. Her hand was placed sideways against her forehead, as though to shade her eyes from the sun. But where she was standing there was no sun, and John could not help guessing why she was shading her eyes. She was crying at leaving the place in that quiet, harrowing sort of way that some women have; that is to say, a few big tears were rolling down her face. John felt a lump rise in his own throat at the sight, and very naturally relieved his feelings in rough language.

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'What the deuce are you after?' he asked. 'Are you going

to keep the horses standing all day?'

Jess did not resent this. The probability is that she guessed its reason. And besides, it is a melancholy fact that women rather like being sworn at than otherwise, provided that the swearer is the man they are attached to. But he must only swear on state occasions. At this moment, too, Mrs. Neville came plunging out

of the house, licking an envelope as she ran.

'There,' she said, 'I hope I haven't kept you waiting. I haven't told the old gentleman half the news; in fact, I've only taken him down to the time when the communications were cut, and I dare say he has seen all that in the papers. But he won't understand anything about it, and if he does he will guess the rest; besides, for all I know, he may be dead and buried by now. I shall have to owe you for the stamp. I think it's threepence. I'll pay you when we meet again—that is, if we ever do meet again. I'm beginning to think that this siege will go on for all eternity

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There, good-bye, my dear! God bless you! When you get out of it, mind you write to the "Times," in London, you know. There, don't cry. I am sure I should not cry if I were going to get out of this place; 'for at this point Jess took the opportunity of Mrs. Neville's fervent embrace to burst out into a sob or two.

In another minute they were in the cart, and Mouti was scrambling up behind.

'Don't cry, old girl,' said John, laying his hand upon her shoulder. 'What can't be cured must be endured.'

'Yes, John,' she answered, and dried her tears.

At the headquarter camp John went in and explained the circumstances of his departure. At first the officer who was temporarily in command—the Commandant having been wounded at the same time that John was—rather demurred to his going, especially when he learnt that he had passed his word not to carry despatches. Presently, however, he thought better of it, and said he supposed that it was all right, as he could not see that their going could do the garrison any harm: 'rather the reverse, in fact, because you can tell the people how we are getting on in this God-forsaken hole. I only wish that somebody would give me a pass, that's all;' whereupon John shook hands with him and left, to find an eager crowd gathered outside.

The news of their going had got abroad, and everybody was running down to hear the truth of it. Such an event as a departure out of Pretoria had not happened for a couple of months and more, and the excitement was proportionate to its novelty.

'I say, Niel, is it true you are going?' halloed out a burly farmer.

'How the deuce did you get a pass?' put in another man with a face like a weasel. He was what is known as a 'Boer vernuker' (literally, a 'Boer cheater'), that is, a travelling trader whose business it is to beguile the simple-minded Dutchman by selling him worthless goods at five times their value. 'I have loads of friends among the Boers. There is hardly a Boer in the Transvaal who does not know me'—('To his cost,' put in a bystander with a grunt)—'and yet I have tried all I know'—('And you know a good deal,' said the same rude man)—'and I can't get a pass.'

'You don't suppose those poor Boers are going to let you out when once they have got you in?' went on the tormentor. 'Why, man, it's against human nature. You've got all their wool: now do you think they want you to have their skin too?'

Whereupon the weasel-faced individual gave a howl of wrath, and pretended to make a rush at the author of these random gibes, waiting half-way for somebody to stop him and prevent a breach of the peace.

'Oh, Miss Croft!' cried out a woman in the crowd, who, like Jess, had been trapped in Pretoria while on a flying visit, 'if you can get a line down to my husband at Maritzburg, to tell him that I am well, except for the rheumatism, from sleeping on the wet

ground; and tell him to kiss the twins for me.'

'I say, Niel, tell those Boers that we will give them a d-d good hiding yet, when Colley relieves us,' sang out a jolly young Englishman in the uniform of the Pretoria Carbineers. He little knew that poor Colley-kind-hearted English gentleman that he was—was sleeping peacefully under six feet of ground with a Boer bullet through his brain.

'Now, Captain Niel, if you are ready, we must trek,' said one of the Boers in Dutch, suiting the action to the word by catching the near wheeler a sharp cut with his riding sjambock that made

him jump nearly out of the traces.

Away started the horses with a plunge, scattering the crowd to the right and left, and, amid a volley of farewells, they were

off upon their homeward journey.

For more than an hour nothing particular happened. John drove on at a fair pace, and the two Boers cantered along behind. At the end of this time, however, just as they were approaching the Red House, where Frank Muller had obtained the pass from the General on the previous day, one of the Boers rode up and told them, roughly enough, that they were to outspan at the house, where they would get some food. As it was past one o'clock, they were by no means sorry to hear this, and accordingly John drew up the cart about fifty yards from the place, and they proceeded to get the horses out, and, having watched them roll and drink, proceeded to the house.

The two Boers, who had also off-saddled, were already sitting on the verandah, and when Jess looked inquiringly towards them one of them pointed with his pipe towards the little room. Taking the hint, they entered, and found a Hottentot woman just setting

some food upon the table.

'Here is dinner: let us eat it,' said John; 'goodness knows when we shall get any more!' and accordingly he sat down.

As he did so the two Boers came in, and one of them made

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some sneering remark that made the other look at them and laugh

insultingly.

John flushed up, but took no notice. Indeed, he thought it safest not, for, to tell the truth, he did not much like the appearance of these two worthies. One of them was a big, smooth, pastyfaced man, with a peculiarly villanous expression of countenance and a prominent tooth that projected in ghastly isolation over his lower lip. The other was a small man, with a sardonic smile and a profusion of black beard and whiskers on his face, and long hair hanging on to his shoulders. Indeed, when he smiled more vigorously than usual, his eyebrows came down and his whiskers advanced, and his moustache went up till there was scarcely any face left, and he looked more like a great bearded monkey than a man. This man was a Boer of the wildest type from the far borders of Zoutpansberg, and did not understand a word of English. Jess nicknamed him the Vilderbeeste, from his likeness to that ferocious-looking and hairy animal. The other man, on the contrary, understood English perfectly, for he had passed many years of his life in Natal, having left that colony on account of some little indiscretion about thrashing Kafirs that had brought him into collision with the penal laws. Him Jess named the Unicorn, on account of his one gleaming tusk.

The Unicorn was an unusually pious man, and on arriving at the table he, to John's astonishment, gently but firmly grasped the

knife with which he was about to cut the meat.

'What's the matter?' said John.

The Boer shook his head sadly. 'No wonder you English are an accursed race, and have been given over into our hands as the great king Agag was given into the hands of the Israelites, so that we have hewed you to pieces. You sit down to meat and give no thanks to the dear Lord,' and he threw back his head and sang out a portentously long Dutch grace through his nose. Not content with that, he set to work to translate it into English, which took a good time; nor was the rendering a very finished one in the result.

The Vilderbeeste grinned sardonically and put in a pious 'Amen,' and then at last they were allowed to proceed with their dinner, which, on the whole, was not a pleasant one. But then they could not expect much pleasure under the circumstances, so they just ate their food and made the best of a bad job. After all, it might have been worse: they might have had no dinner to eat.

CHAPTER XXII.

ON THE ROAD.

They had just finished their meal, and were about to leave the table, when suddenly the door opened, and who should appear at it but Frank Muller himself! There was no mistake about him; there he stood, stroking his long golden beard, as big, as handsome, and, to Jess's mind, as evil-looking as ever. The cold eyes fell upon John with a glance of recognition, and then something like a smile began to play round the corners of the fine-cut, cruel mouth. Suddenly, however, his gaze lit upon the two Boers, one of whom was picking his teeth with a steel fork and the other lighting his pipe within a few inches of Jess's head, and instantly his face grew stern and angry.

'What did I tell you two men?' he said: 'that you were not to eat with the prisoners' (this word struck awkwardly on Jess's ear). 'I told you that they were to be treated with all respect, and here I find you sprawling over the table and smoking in their faces. Be off with you!'

The smooth-faced man with the tusk rose at once with a sigh, put down the steel fork with which he had been operating, and departed, recognising that Meinheer Muller was not a commanding officer to be trifled with, but his companion, the Vilderbeeste, demurred. 'What,' he said, tossing his head so as to throw the long black hair out of his eyes, 'am I not fit to sit at meat with a couple of accursed English—a rooibaatje and a woman? If I had my way he should clean my boots and she should cut up my tobacco;' and he grinned at the notion till eyebrows, whiskers, and moustache all nearly met round his nose, making him look for all the world like a hairy-faced baboon.

Frank Muller made no answer in words. He simply took one step forward, pounced upon his insubordinate follower, and with a single swing of his athletic frame sent him flying headlong through the door, so that the free and independent burgher lit upon his head in the passage, smashing his pipe and considerably damaging his best feature—his nose. 'There,' said Muller, shutting the door after him, 'that is the only way to deal with a fellow like that. And now let me bid you good-day, Miss Jess,' and he extended his hand, which Jess took, rather coldly it must be owned.

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'It has given me great pleasure to be able to do you this little service,' he added politely. 'I had considerable difficulty in getting the pass from the General—indeed I was obliged to urge my personal services before he would give it to me. But, never mind that, I did get it, as you know, and it will be my care to escort you safely to Mooifontein.'

Jess bowed, and Muller turned to John, who had risen from his chair and was standing some two paces from him, and addressed him. 'Captain Niel,' he said, 'you and I have had some differences in the past. I hope that the service I am doing you will prove that I, for one, bear no malice. I will go farther. As I told you before, I was to blame in that affair in the inn yard at Wakkerstroom. Let us shake hands and end what we cannot mend,' and he stepped forward and extended his hand.

Jess turned to see what would happen. She knew the whole story, and hoped he would not take the man's hand; then, remem-

bering their position, she hoped he would.

John turned colour a little, and then deliberately drew himself up and put his hand behind his back.

'I am very sorry, Mr. Muller,' he said, 'but even in our present position I cannot shake hands with you; you will know why.'

Jess saw a flush of the furious passion which was his weak point spread itself over the Boer's face.

'I do not know, Captain Niel. Be so good as to explain.'

'Very well, I will,' said John calmly. 'You tried to assassinate me.'

'What do you mean?' thundered Muller.

'What I say. You shot at me twice under pretence of firing at a buck. Look here!'—and he took up his soft black hat, which he still had—'here is the mark of one of your bullets! I did not know about it then; I do now, and I decline to shake hands with

you.'

By this time Muller's fury had got the better of him. 'You shall answer for that, you English liar!' he said, at the same time clapping his hand to his belt, in which his hunting-knife was placed. Thus for a few seconds they stood face to face. John never flinched or moved. There he stood, quiet and strong as some old stubby tree, his plain honest face and watchful eye affording a strange contrast to the beautiful but demoniacal countenance of the great Dutchman. Presently he spoke in measured tones.

'I have proved myself a better man than yourself once, Frank Muller, and if necessary I will again, notwithstanding that knife of yours. But, in the meantime, I wish to remind you that I have a pass signed by your own General guaranteeing our safety. And now, Mr. Muller,' with a flash of the blue eyes, 'I am ready.' The Dutchman drew the knife and then replaced it in its sheath. For a moment he was minded to end the matter then and there, but suddenly remembered, even in his rage, that there was a witness.

'A pass from the General!' he said, forgetting his caution in his fury. 'Much good a pass from the General is likely to be to you. You are in my power, man! If I choose to close my hand I can crush you. But there—there,' he added, checking himself, 'perhaps I ought to make allowances. You are one of a defeated people, and no doubt are sore, and say what you do not mean. Anyhow, there is an end of it, especially in the presence of a lady. Some day we may be able to settle our trouble like men, Captain Niel; till then, with your permission, we will let it drop.'

'Quite so, Mr. Muller,' said John, 'only you must not ask me

to shake hands with you.'

'Very good, Captain Niel; and now, if you will allow me, I will tell the boy to get your horses in; we must be getting on if we are to reach Heidelberg to-night.' And he bowed himself out, feeling that his temper had once more endangered the success of his plans. 'Curse the man!' he said to himself: 'he is what those English call a gentleman. It was brave of him to refuse to take my hand when he is in my power.'

'John,' said Jess, as soon as the door had closed, 'I am afraid of that man. If I had understood that he had anything to do with the pass I would not have taken it. I thought that the writing was familiar to me. Oh dear! I wish we had stopped at

Pretoria.'

'What can't be cured must be endured,' said John again.
'The only thing to do is to make the best of it, and get on as we can. You will be all right anyhow, but he hates me like poison. I suppose that it is on account of Bessie.'

'Yes, that's it,' said Jess: 'he is madly in love with Bessie,

or was.'

'It is curious to think that a man like that can be in love,' remarked John as he lit his pipe, 'but it only shows what queer mixtures people are. I say, Jess, if this fellow hates me so, what made him give me the pass, eh? What's his game?'

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Jess shook her head as she answered, 'I don't know, John; I don't like it.'

'I suppose he can't mean to murder me; he did try it on once, you know.'

'Oh no, John,' she answered with a sort of cry, 'not that.'

'Well, I don't know that it would matter much,' he said, with an approach to cheerfulness which was rather a failure. 'It would save one a deal of worry, and only anticipate things a bit. But there, I frightened you, and I dare say that he is, for the present at any rate, an honest man, and has no intentions on my person. Look! there is Mouti calling us. I wonder if those brutes have given him anything to eat! We'll collar the rest of this leg of mutton on chance. At any rate, Mr. Frank Muller shan't starve me to death,' and with a cheerful laugh he left the room.

In a few minutes they were on their road again. As they started Frank Muller came up, took off his hat, and informed them that he would probably join them on the morrow below Heidelberg, in which town they would find every preparation to enable them to spend the night comfortably. If he did not join them it would be because he was detained on duty. In that case the two men had his orders to escort them safely to Mooifontein, and, he added significantly, 'I do not think that you will be troubled with any further impoliteness.'

In another moment he had galloped off on his great black horse, leaving the pair considerably mystified and not a little relieved.

'Well,' said John, 'at any rate that does not look like foul play, unless, indeed, he has gone on to prepare a warm reception for us.'

Jess shrugged her shoulders, she could not make it out; and then they settled themselves down to their long lonely drive. They had forty odd miles to cover, but the guides, or rather the guard, would only consent to their outspanning once, which they did on the open veldt a little before sunset. At sundown they inspanned again, and started across the darkening veldt. The road was in a shocking state, and until the moon got up, which it did about nine o'clock, the journey was both difficult and dangerous. After that things were a little better; and at last, about eleven o'clock, they got into Heidelberg. The town seemed almost deserted. Evidently the great body of the Boers were at the front, and had only left a guard at their seat of government.

'Where are we to outspan?' asked John of the Unicorn, who was jogging on alongside, apparently half asleep.

'At the hotel,' was the short reply, and thither they went; and thankful enough they were to get there, and to find, from the

lights in the windows, that the people were still up.

Jess had been asleep for the last couple of hours, notwithstanding the awful jolting of the cart. Her arm was hooked round the back of the seat, and her head rested against John's greatcoat, which he had fixed up in such a way as to make a pillow. 'Where are we?' she asked, waking up with a start as the cart stopped. 'I have had such a bad dream! I dreamt that I was travelling through life, and that suddenly everything stopped, and I was dead.'

'I don't wonder at it,' laughed John; 'the road for the last ten miles has been as rough as anybody's life. We are at the hotel. Here come the boys to take the horses,' and he clambered stiffly out of the cart and helped or rather lifted her down, for she was almost too cramped to move.

Standing at the inn door, holding a light above her head, they found a pleasant-looking Englishwoman, who welcomed them

heartily.

'Frank Muller was here three hours ago, and told me to expect you,' she said; 'and very glad I am to see an English face again, I can tell you. My name is Gooch. Tell me, is my husband all right in Pretoria? He went up there with his waggon just before the siege began, and I have not heard a word from him since.'

'Yes,' said John, 'he is all right. He was slightly wounded

in the shoulder a month ago, but he has quite recovered.'

'Oh, thank God!' said the poor woman, beginning to cry; 'those devils told me that he was dead—to torment me, I suppose. Come in, miss; there is some hot supper ready when you have washed your hands. The boys will see to the horses.'

Accordingly they entered, and were made as happy as a good supper, a hearty welcome, and comfortable beds could make people

in their condition.

In the early morning one of their estimable escort sent in a message to say that they were not to start before half-past ten, as their horses required more rest, so they got several hours more in bed than they had expected, and anybody who has ever made a journey in a post-cart in South Africa can understand what a blessing that was. At nine they had breakfast, and as the clock

struck half-past ten Mouti brought the cart round, and with it came the two Boers.

'Well, Mrs. Gooch,' said John, 'what do we owe you?'

'Nothing, Captain Niel, nothing. If you only knew what a weight you have taken off my mind! Besides, we are quite ruined; the Boers have taken all my husband's cattle and horses, and until last week six of them were quartered on me without paying a farthing, so it makes no odds to me.'

'Never mind, Mrs. Gooch,' said John cheerfully, 'the Government will compensate you when this business is over, no doubt.'

Mrs. Gooch shook her head prophetically. 'Never a farthing do I expect to see,' she said. 'If only I can get my husband back, and we can escape out of this wicked place with our lives, I shall be thankful. And look here, Captain Niel, I have put up a basket full of food-bread, meat, and hard-boiled eggs, and a bottle of three-star brandy. They may be useful to you and the young lady before you get home. I don't know where you will sleep to-night, for the English are still holding Standerton, so you won't be able to stop there, and you can't get right through. No, don't thank me, I could not do less. Good-bye-good-bye, miss; I hope you will get through all right. You had better look out, though. Those two men you have got with you are a very bad lot. I heard say that that fat-faced man with the tooth shot two wounded men through the head after the fight at Bronker's Spruit, and I know no good of the other. They were laughing and talking together about you in the kitchen this morning; one of my boys overheard them, and the man with the long hair said that, at any rate, they would not be troubled with you after to-night. I don't know what he meant; perhaps they are going to change the escort; but I thought that I had better tell you.'

John looked grave, and his suspicions rearose, but at that moment one of the men in question rode up and told him that he must start at once, and so off they went.

This second day's journey was in many respects a counterpart of the first. The road was utterly deserted, and they saw neither Boer, Englishman, nor Kafir upon it; nothing, indeed, except a few herds of game grazing on the ridges. About two o'clock, however, just as they had started on after a short outspan, a little incident occurred. Suddenly the Vilderbeeste's horse put his foot into an antbear hole and fell heavily, throwing his rider on to his head. He was up in a minute, but his forehead had struck against the

jawbone of a dead buck, and the blood was pouring from it all down his hairy face. His companion laughed brutally at the sight, for there are some natures in the world to which the sight of pain is irresistibly comical, but the injured man cursed aloud, trying to stanch the flow with the lappet of his coat.

'Waacht een beeche' [Wait a bit], said Jess, 'there is some water in that pool,' and without further to do she got out of the trap and led the man, who was half-blinded with blood, to the spring. Here she made him kneel down and bathed the wound, which was not a very deep one, till it stopped bleeding, and then, having first placed a pad of cotton-wool, some of which she happened to have in the cart, upon it, bound her handkerchief tightly round his head. The man, brute as he was, appeared to be much touched at her kindness.

'Almighty,' he said, 'but you have a kind heart and soft fingers; my own wife could not have done it better; it is a pity that you are a damned Englishwoman.'

Jess climbed back into the cart, making no reply, and they started on, the Vilderbeeste looking more savage and inhuman than ever with the discoloured handkerchief round his head, and his dense beard and hair matted with the blood he would not take the trouble to wash out of them.

After this nothing further occurred till, by the orders of their escort, they outspanned, an hour or so before sunset, at a spot in the veldt where a faint track forked out of the Standerton road.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE DRIFT OF THE VAAL.

The day had been intensely and overpoweringly hot, and our travellers sat in the shade of the cart positively gasping. During the afternoon there had been a little breeze, but this had now died away, and the stifling air felt as thick as though they were breathing cream. Even the two Boers seemed to feel the heat, for they were both outstretched on the grass a few paces to the left, to all appearance fast asleep. As for the horses, they were thoroughly done up—too much so to eat—and hobbled along as well as their knee-halters would allow, daintily picking a mouthful here and a mouthful there. The only person who did not seem to mind was the Zulu

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Mouti, who sat on an antheap near the horses, in full glare of the setting sun, and comfortably droned out a little song of his own invention, for Zulus are as great at improvising as the Italians.

'Have another egg, Jess?' said John. 'It will do you good.'

'No, thank you; the last one stuck in my throat. It is impossible to eat in this heat.'

'You had better. Goodness knows when and where we shall stop again. I can get nothing out of our delightful escort; either

they don't know or they won't say.'

'I can't, John. There is a thunderstorm coming up, I can feel it in my head, and I can never eat before a thunderstorm—and when I am tired,' she added by an afterthought.

After that the conversation flagged for a while.

'John,' said Jess at last, 'where do you suppose we are going to camp to-night? If we follow the main road we shall reach Standerton in an hour.'

'I don't suppose that they will go near Standerton,' he said.
'I suppose that we shall cross the Vaal by another drift and have to "veldt" it.'

Just then the two Boers woke up and began to talk earnestly together, as though they were debating something hotly.

Slowly the huge red ball of the sun sank towards the horizon. steeping the earth and sky in blood. About a hundred yards from where they sat the little bridle-path that branched from the main road crossed the crest of one of the great land-waves that rolled away in every direction towards the far horizon. John watched the sun sinking behind it till something called away his attention for a minute. When he looked up again there was a figure on horseback, standing quite still, upon the crest of the ridge, in the full glow of the now disappearing sun. It was Frank Muller. John recognised him in a moment. His horse was standing sideways, so that even at that distance every line of his features, and even the trigger-guard of the rifle that rested on his knee, showed distinctly against the background of smoky red. Nor was that all. Both he and his horse had the appearance of being absolutely on fire. The effect produced was so weird and extraordinary that John called his companion's attention to it. She looked, and shuddered involuntarily.

'He looks like a devil in hell,' she said; 'the fire seems to be running all up and down him.'

'Well,' said John, 'he certainly is a devil, but I am sorry to

say that he has not yet reached his destination. Here he comes, like a whirlwind.'

In another twenty seconds Muller had reined the great black horse on to his haunches alongside of them, and was smiling sweetly and taking off his hat.

'You see I have managed to keep my word,' he said. 'I can tell you that I had great difficulty in doing so; indeed I was nearly obliged to give the thing up at the last moment. However, here I am.'

'Where are we to outspan to-night?' asked Jess. 'At Standerton?'

'No,' he said; 'I am afraid that that is more than I can manage for you, unless you can persuade the English officer there to surrender. What I have arranged is, that we should cross the Vaal at a drift I know about two hours (twelve miles) from here, and outspan at a farm on the other side. Do not trouble, I assure you you shall both sleep well to-night,' and he smiled a somewhat terrifying smile, Jess thought.

'But how about this drift, Mr. Muller?' said John. 'Is it safe? I should have thought that the Vaal would have been in flood after all the rain that we have had.'

'The drift is perfectly safe, Captain Niel. I have crossed it myself about two hours ago. I know you have a bad opinion of me, but I suppose you do not think that I should guide you to an unsafe drift?' and with another bow he rode on to speak to the two Boers, saying, as he went, 'Will you tell the Kafir to put the horses in?'

With a shrug of the shoulders John rose and went off towards Mouti, to help him to drive up the four greys, who were now standing limply together, biting at the flies, that, before a storm, sting more sharply than at any other time. The two horses belonging to the escort were some fifty paces to the left. It was as though they appreciated the position of affairs, and declined to mix with the animals of the discredited Englishman.

The two Boers rose as Muller came and walked off towards their horses, Muller slowly following them. As they came the horses hobbled away another thirty yards or so, and then lifted up their heads, and, as a consequence, their forelegs, to which the heads were tied, and stood looking defiantly at their captors, for all the world as though they were trying to make up their minds whether or no to shake hands with them.

Frank Muller was alongside the two men now, and they were alongside the horses.

'Listen!' he said sternly.

The men looked up.

'Go on loosening the reins, and listen.'

They obeyed, and began to slowly fumble at the knee-halters.

'You understand what our orders are. Repeat them-you!'

The man with the tooth, who was addressed, still handling the rein, began as follows: 'To take the two prisoners to the Vaal, to force them into the water where there is no drift, at night, so that they drown: if they do not drown, to shoot them.'

'Those are the orders,' said the Vilderbeeste, grinning.

'You understand them?'

'We understand, Meinheer; but, forgive us, the matter is a big one. You gave the orders—we wish to see the authority.'

'Yah, yah,' said the other, 'show us the authority. These are two harmless people enough. Show us the authority for killing them. People must not be killed so, even if they are English folk, without proper authority, especially when one is a pretty girl who would do for a man's wife.'

Frank Muller set his teeth. 'Nice fellows you are to have under one!' he said. 'I am your officer; what other authority do you want? But I thought of this. See here!' and he drew a paper from his pocket. 'Here, you—read it! Careful now—do not let them see from the waggon.'

The big flabby-faced man took the paper and, still bending down over the horse's knee, read aloud:—

'The two prisoners and their servant (an Englishman, an English girl, and a Zulu Kafir) to be executed in pursuance of our decree, as your commanding officer shall order, as enemies to the Republic. For so doing this shall be your warrant.'

'You see the signature,' said Muller, 'and you do not dispute it?'

'Yah, we see it, and we do not dispute it.'

'Good. Give me back the warrant.'

The man with the tooth was about to do so when his companion interposed.

'No,' he said, 'the warrant must remain with us. I do not like the job. If it were only the man and the Kafir now—but the girl, the girl! If we give you back the warrant, what shall we have to show for the deed of blood? The warrant must remain with us.' 'Yah, yah, he is right,' said the Unicorn; 'the warrant must remain with us. Put it in your pocket, Jan.'

'Curse you, give it me!' said Muller between his teeth.

'No, Frank Muller, no!' answered the Vilderbeeste, patting his pocket, while the two or three square inches of skin round his nose wrinkled up in a hairy grin that, owing to the cut on his head, was even more curious than usual; 'if you wish to have the warrant you shall have it, but then we shall up-saddle and go, and you can do your murdering yourself. There, there! take your choice; we shall be glad enough to get home, for we do not like the job. If I go out shooting I like to shoot buck or Kafirs, not white people.'

Frank Muller reflected a moment, and then he laughed a

little.

'You are funny people, you home-bred Boers,' he said; 'but perhaps you are right. After all, what does it matter who has the warrant, provided the thing is well done? Mind that there is no

bungling, that is all.'

'Yah, yah,' said the fat-faced man, 'you can trust us for that. It won't be the first that we have toppled over. If I have my warrant I ask nothing better than to go on shooting Englishmen all night, one down, the other come on. I know no prettier sight than an Englishman toppling over.'

'Stop that talk and saddle up, the cart is waiting. You fools can never understand the difference between killing when it is necessary to kill and killing for killing's sake. These people must

die because they have betrayed the land.'

'Yah, yah,' said the Vilderbeeste, 'betrayed the land; we have heard that before. Those who betray the land must manure it;

that is a good rule;' and he laughed and passed on.

Frank Muller watched his retreating form with a smile of peculiar malignity on his handsome face. 'Ah, my friend,' he said to himself in Dutch, 'you and that warrant will part company before you are many hours older. Why, it would be enough to hang me, even in this happy land of patriots. Old —— would not forgive even me for taking that little liberty with his name. Dear me, what a lot of trouble one has to take to be rid of a single enemy! Well, it must be done, and Bessie is well worth it; but if it had not been for this war I could never have managed it. Ah! I did well to give my voice for war. I am sorry for the girl Jess, but it must be; there must be no living witness left. Ah! we

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are going to have a storm. So much the better. Such deeds are best done in a storm.'

Muller was right; the storm was coming up fast, throwing a veil of inky cloud across the star-spangled sky. In South Africa there is but little twilight, and the darkness follows hard upon the heels of the day. No sooner had the great angry ball of the sun finally disappeared than the night swept with all her stars across the sky. And now after her came the great storm, covering up her beauty with his blackness. The air was stiflingly hot. Above was a starry space, to the east the angry bosom of the storm, in which the lightnings were already playing with an incessant flickering movement, and to the west a deep red glow, reflected from the sunken sun, yet lingered on the horizon.

On toiled the horses through the gathering gloom. Fortunately, the road was fairly level and free from mud-holes, and Frank Muller rode just ahead to show the way, his strong manly form standing out clear against the departing western glow. Silent was the earth, silent as death. No bird or beast, no blade of grass or breath of air stirred upon its surface. The only sign of life was the continual flickering of those awful tongues of light as they licked the lips of the storm. On for mile after mile, on through the desolation! They could not be far from the river now, and could catch the distant growling of the thunder, echoing solemnly down it.

It was an awful night. Great pillars of mud-coloured cloud came creeping across the surface of the veldt towards them, seemingly blown along without a wind. And now, too, a ghastly looking ringed moon arose and threw a weird, distorted light upon the blackness that seemed to shudder in her rays as though with a prescience of the advancing terror. On crept the mud-coloured columns, and on above them, and resting on them, came the muttering storm. The cart was quite close to the river now, and they could plainly hear its murmur. To their left was a koppie, covered with white, slab-like stones, on which the sickly moonbeams danced.

'Look, John, look!' cried Jess with an hysterical laugh; 'it looks like a huge graveyard, and the dark shadows between are the ghosts of the buried.'

'Nonsense,' said John sternly; 'what do you mean by talking such rubbish?'

He felt that she was a little off her balance, and, what is more,

he was getting rather off his own, and therefore was naturally the angrier with her, and the more determined to be perfectly matter-of-fact.

Jess made no answer, but she was frightened, she could not tell why. The whole thing resembled some awful dream, or one of Doré's pictures come to life. No doubt, also, the near presence of the storm exercised an effect upon her nerves. Even the wearied horses snorted and shook themselves uneasily.

They crept over the ridge of a wave of land, and the wheels rolled softly on the grass.

'Why, we are off the road!' shouted John to Muller, who was

still guiding them, fifteen or twenty paces ahead.

'All right! all right! it is a short cut to the ford!' he called in answer, and his voice rang strange and hollow through the great depths of the silence.

Below them, a hundred yards away, the light, such as it was, gleamed faintly upon the wide surface of the river. Another five minutes and they were on its shore, but in the gathering gloom they could not make out the opposite bank.

'Turn to the left!' shouted Muller; 'the ford is a few yards

up. It is too deep here for the horses.'

John turned accordingly, and followed Muller's horse some three hundred yards up the bank till they came to a spot where the water ran with an angry music, and there was a great swirl of eddies.

'Here is the place,' said Muller; 'you must make haste through. The house is just the other side, and it will be better to get there before the tempest breaks.'

'It's all very well,' said John, 'but I can't see an inch before me; I don't know where to drive.'

'Drive straight ahead; the water is not more than three feet deep, and there are no rocks.'

'I am not going, and that is all about it.'

'You must go, Captain Niel. You cannot stop here, and if you can we cannot. Look there, man!' and he pointed to the east, which now presented a truly awful and magnificent sight.

Down, right on to them, its centre bowed out like the belly of a sail by the weight of the wind behind, swept the great stormcloud, while over all its surface the lightning played unceasingly, appearing and disappearing in needles of fire, and twisting and writhing serpentwise round and about its outer edges. So brilliant JESS.

was the intermittent light that it appeared to fire the revolving pillars of mud-coloured cloud beneath, and gave ghastly peeps of river and bank and plain, miles upon miles away. But perhaps the most awful thing of all was the preternatural silence. The distant muttering of thunder that they had heard had died away, and now the great storm swept on in silent majesty, like the passage of a ghostly host, from which there arose no sound of feet or rolling of wheels. Only before it sped the swift angels of the wind, and behind it swung the curtain of the rain.

Even as Muller spoke a gust of icy air caught the cart and tilted it, and the lightning needles began to ply more dreadfully

than ever. The storm was breaking upon them.

'Come, get on, get on!' he shouted, 'you will be killed here; the lightning always strikes along the water;' and as he said it he struck one of the wheelers sharply with his whip.

'Climb over the back of the seat, Mouti, and stand by to help me with the reins!' sang out John to the Zulu, who obeyed, getting between him and Jess.

'Now, Jess, hang on and say your prayers, for it strikes me we

shall have need of them. So, horses, so!'

The horses backed and plunged, but Muller on the one side and the smooth-faced Boer on the other lashed them without mercy, and at last in they went into the river with a rush. The gust had passed now, and for a moment or two there was renewed silence, except for the whirl of the water and the snake-like hiss of the coming rain.

For a few yards, ten or fifteen perhaps, all went well, and then John suddenly discovered that they were getting into deep water; the two leaders were evidently almost off their legs, and could scarcely stand against the current of the flooded river.

'Damn you!' he shouted back, 'there is no drift here.'

'Go on, go on, it is all right!' came Muller's voice in answer. John said no more, but, putting out all his strength, tried to get the horses round. Jess turned herself on the seat to look, and just then came a blaze of lightning which revealed Muller and his two companions standing dismounted on the bank, the muzzles of their rifles pointing straight at the cart.

'Oh God!' she screamed, 'they are going to shoot us.'

Even as the words passed her lips three tongues of flame flared out from the rifles' mouths, and the Zulu Mouti, sitting by her side, pitched heavily forward on to his head into the bottom of the cart, while one of the wheelers reared straight up into the air with a shriek of agony, and came down with a splash into the river.

And then followed a scene the horror of which baffles my poor pen. Overhead the storm burst in fury, and flash after flash of fork, or rather chain lightning, fell into the river. The thunder, too, began to crack like the trump of doom; the wind rushed down, tearing the surface of the water into foam, and, catching under the tent of the cart, lifted it clean off the wheels, so that it began to float. Then the two leaders, made mad with fear by the fury of the storm and the dying struggles of the offwheeler, plunged and tore at the traces till they actually rent themselves loose and vanished between the darkness overhead and the boiling water beneath. Away floated the cart, now touching the bottom and now riding on the water like a boat, oscillating this way and that, and slowly turning round and round. With it floated the dead horse, dragging down the other wheeler beneath the water. It was awful to see his struggles in the glare of the lightning, but at last he sank and choked.

And meanwhile, sounding sharp and clear across the din and hubbub of the storm, came the cracking of the three rifles whenever the flashes showed the whereabouts of the cart to the murderers on the bank. Mouti was lying still in the bottom on the bed-plank, a bullet between his broad shoulders and another in his skull; but John felt that his life was yet whole in him, though something had hissed past his face and stung it. Instinctively he reached across the cart and drew Jess on to his knee, and cowered over her, thinking dimly that perhaps his body

would protect her from the bullets.

Rip! rip! through the wood and canvas; phut! phut! through the air; but some merciful power protected them, and though one cut John's coat and two passed through the skirt of Jess's dress, not a bullet struck them. And very soon the shooting began to grow wild, and then that dense veil of rain came down and wrapped them so close that even the lightning could not show their whereabouts to the assassins on the bank.

'Stop shooting,' said Frank Muller; 'the cart has sunk, and there is an end of them. No human being can have lived through that fire and the Vaal in flood.'

The two Boers ceased firing, and the Unicorn shook his head softly and remarked to his companion that the damned English people in the water could not be much wetter than they were on

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the bank. It was a curious thing to say at such a moment, but probably the spirit that animated the remark was not so much callousness as that which animated Cromwell, who flipped the ink in his neighbour's face when he signed the death-warrant of

his king.

The Vilderbeeste made no reply. His conscience was oppressed; he had a touch of imagination. He thought of the soft fingers that had bound up his head that morning; the handkerchief-her handkerchief!-was still around it. Now those fingers would be gripping at the slippery stones of the Vaal in their death-struggle, or probably they were already limp in death, with little bits of gravel sticking beneath the nails. It was a painful thought, but he consoled himself by thinking of the warrant, and also by the reflection that whoever had shot the people he had not, for he had been careful to fire wide of the cart every time.

Muller was also thinking of the warrant which he had forged.

He must get it back somehow, even if-

'Let us take shelter under the bank there. There is a flat place, about fifty yards up, where the bank lies over. This rain is drowning us. We can't up-saddle till it clears. I must have a nip of brandy too. Almighty! I can see that girl's face now! the lightning shone on it just as I shot. Well, she will be in heaven

now, poor thing, if English people ever go to heaven."

It was the Unicorn who spoke, and the Vilderbeeste made no reply, but advanced with him to where the horses stood. They took the patient brutes that were waiting for their masters, their heads well down and the water streaming from them, and led them along with them. Frank Muller stood by his own horse thinking, and watched them vanish into the gloom. How was he to get that warrant back without dyeing his hands even redder

than they were?

As he thought an answer came. For at that moment, accompanied by a fearful thunderclap, there shot from the storm overhead, which had now nearly passed away, one of those awful flashes that sometimes end an African tempest. It lit up the whole scene round as light as day, and right in the white heart of it Muller saw his two companions in crime and their horses as the great king saw the men in the furnace. They were about forty paces from him on the crest of the bank. He saw them, one moment erect; the next-men and horses falling this way and that prone to the earth. And then it was all dark again. He staggered with the shock, and when it had passed rushed to the spot, calling the men by name; but no answer came except the echo of his voice. He was there now, and the moonlight began to struggle faintly through the rain. Its pale beams lit upon two outstretched forms—one lying on its back, its distorted features gazing up to heaven, the other on its face. By them, the legs of the nearest sticking straight into the air, lay the two horses. They had all gone to their account. The lightning had killed them, as it kills many an innocent man in Africa.

Frank Muller looked; and then, forgetting about the warrant and everything else in the horror of what he took to be a visible judgment, rushed to his horse and galloped wildly away, pursued

by all the terrors of hell.

(To be continued.)

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THE RAILWAY BUBBLE,

FORTY years ago since the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was visited by a madness for gambling and speculation which has never been surpassed by anything of the same kind within the memory of men now living, and probably was never equalled during any period of our history, except in the days of the South Sea Bubble in 1720. Turning over some old newspapers of George I.'s time, I came across a column of advertisements of companies in 1720. They were mostly styled 'subscriptions to adventurers,' and the capital in each class ranged from two to fifteen millions; the speculations in one paper only were for 'interchanging wool for woof' (query, going for wool and getting shorn), trading in purchase and sale of 'human hair,' 'hops,' 'white lead,' 'starch,' 'madder,' and (rather a bad speculation now) 'buying up doubtful titles to land in Ireland,' with an

eye to successful litigation.

At that time newspapers, which usually were about the size of half a sheet of demy paper, were enlarged for awhile into four The 'London Gazette' was a sheet of two pages only, just as it was in the time of the Stuarts; and previously to 1845 it was by no means of a bulky size, but in October and November of that year the files of the 'Gazette,' in which all the newly proposed Parliamentary schemes were published, extended over 4,031 pages of double columns, measured 11 inches 'closely bound' in depth, and at the lowest computation contained advertisements for Parliamentary schemes which must have cost the adventurers from thirty-five to forty thousand pounds to insert—at one shilling a line. This is not intended to be a statistical article, but that will give an idea of what the cost of advertising alone was. The reader must bear in mind that railway companies, or projected companies, had in those days to publish their notices, which sometimes occupied two, and even three, columns of a newspaper, in every county in which any land was proposed to be taken, or to which the Bill related; and, the last requirement as to publication being vague and undefined, if a new company took powers to run over a small portion of one of the few established railways, and to make working and traffic arrangements, they were advised

to, and did, ex abundanti cautelâ, publish these long notices in many counties in or through which the whole of that railway extended.

It is just under half a century ago when, in 1836, the London and Greenwich Railway was the only railway running out of London, that country people were admitted to the London terminus at the charge of a penny each to see the train start. On my way to school, when a boy thirteen years old, I was taken to see this grand sight, and in the evening to see one which pleased me much more, which was the starting of the night mail coaches to all parts of England from the General Post Office.

The London and Birmingham Railway, opened in 1838, was the wonder of the London world, but the system gradually spread without much tuck of drum or blast of trumpet, and at the time of the railway mania of 1845 the railway service in England and Scotland was pretty much as follows-namely, with the exception of about thirty miles of railway connecting Dundee, Arbroath, and Forfar, the only railways in Scotland were connecting lines of railway from Berwick-on-Tweed, skirting, or rather in the same direction as, the shores of the Firth of Forth to Edinburgh, thence to Glasgow, Greenock, Saltcoats, Troon, and Ayr, opening the North Sea to the Irish Channel. Durham was the farthest point of the North country which boasted a network of railways. The Maryport and Carlisle Railway connected the Irish seaboard and that of the North Sea between Solway Firth and Sunderland. From Sunderland there was a connecting chain of railway communication by a somewhat devious route, and, with several changes of railway, westwards as far as Exeter, the extreme point in the West of England where a railway existed. And on the seaboard of England the principal, if not all the places of importance to which the railway system was extended, working round the coast from north-west to north-east, were Liverpool, Bristol, Portsmouth, Southampton, Brighton, Dover, London, Great Yarmouth (to Norwich only), Hull, Whitby, Stockton, Hartlepool, Sunderland, and Shields.

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The probable cause of the mania for railway speculation was occasioned by the successful application for a direct railway from London to York in 1845. Though the final Act was not passed until 1846, the ultimate fate of the undertaking as regards success was almost certain. The contest excited as much or more attention as the Thirlmere Lake Waterworks scheme of the Corporation

of Manchester in 1878-79, or that of the Manchester Ship Canal

during the past two years.

The London and York Railway, now the Great Northern Railway (as another rival undertaking occupying the same country was merged in the same scheme), was one of the most bonâ-fide schemes ever put before Parliament, as well as the most carefully prepared and matured, and the best engineers, lawyers, and surveyors were retained all through the work. It was stated at the time, and has since been found to be true, that the preliminary cost of obtaining the Act amounted to four hundred and fifty thousand pounds. The money would soon melt away. The surveying and levelling 186 miles of country, with every obstacle thrown in the promoters' way by rival companies, landowners, inhabitants, and others, who could not see that the iron horse was an inevitable necessity, must have put the Company to an enormous expense, to say nothing of the requirements by Parliament in those times (until the year 1846), that notice should be served personally, not by post, on every owner, lessee, and occupier whose land or property might be taken; so that if any one of the above class of proprietor was in the United Kingdom, and if the owner or lessee of a house situated in London, for instance, no matter how humble, had his usual place of abode at John o' Groat's House or the Land's End, the notice would have had to be personally served on him, wherever he was, or left at his usual place of abode.

The London and York Railway was the excitement in the Parliamentary world; the Committee of the House of Commons which sat through a great part of the Session of 1845 passed the Bill, and its importance was so great that the Bill was read a third time in the Commons in 1845, and by some arrangement it went pro formâ only through the Commons in 1846, and was sent up

for consideration by the Lords.

The speculation on the Stock Exchange about this celebrated railway was very great. The principal feature was in one of the earlier stages, on the inquiry by the House of Commons, in 1845, into the correctness of the preliminary proceedings with reference to compliance with the Standing Orders of Parliament. The opposition was very severe and the inquiry lasted many days, and when at last the decision was to be given, the excitement was tremendous;—as, if the decision was adverse, the Bill was dead, if favourable, there was a fair prospect of its being eventually passed.

On the important day when its fate was to be decided by the

Standing Orders Committee the lobbies of the House were crammed. and crowds of people were outside waiting for the verdict, including express boys on horseback, and messengers with carrier pigeons; in fact, every device, in the absence of a telegraph, was resorted to for getting the news earliest to the City. knowing speculator hit upon a scheme, possibly derived from one adopted in the time of James II., for announcing the verdict after the trial of the seven bishops, which, as Macaulay tells us, was done by gunpowder. There was a man posted on each of Westminster, Waterloo, Blackfriars, and Southwark bridges, with an oldfashioned blunderbuss, well charged with powder, under his coat, and on London Bridge a man on horseback was waiting for the signal from Southwark. Directly the office was given to the fugleman at Westminster, bang went the old weapon, which was answered by the man on Waterloo, and so on to Southwark, and the news arrived first by that means at the Stock Exchange.

Country towns whose inhabitants had either felt the ruinous depression occasioned by the abandonment of the road, or had heard of it, began to think that the time was come when the iron horse must win, and from north to south, and from east to west, the cry arose for railway communication. Hopes were entertained that the Government would take the subject up, but Sir Robert Peel, who was then Prime Minister, was strongly of opinion that the matter should be left to private enterprise entirely in the United Kingdom; and that State assistance, if any, should be reserved for our colonies. In 1847, when out of office, Sir Robert Peel accepted the chairmanship of the Committee on Indian Railways, and devoted his undivided attention to the subject, to

the great advantage of the commercial world.

Reverting to the immense cost of the preliminary steps for floating the London and York Railway, which was done with money honestly subscribed, the madness of incurring similar great costs on mere speculation ought to have been apparent to the world at the time; but, as experience shows us every day, there are no bounds to popular mania. The new movement naturally found favour with speculators on the Stock Exchange, and there arose a new class of people, 'Promoters of Railways,' whose occupation seemed to be that and nothing else. They sprang up, as it were, out of the earth. All England, Scotland, and Ireland were mapped out early in the autumn of 1845, and there was not a country town where the seeds of speculation did not take root.

Meetings were held, provisional directors appointed; prospectus writing became a regular trade, as did traffic taking; and, as the traffic was taken by cunning agents on market days, noblemen and country gentlemen and tradespeople persuaded themselves that a railway must be self-supporting. Probably not one in a hundred had the remotest idea of the cost of a line when they gave in their names as provisional directors, nor dreamt of any personal liability. They put the case to themselves in a twofold manner, and fancied if the railway was sanctioned their fortunes would be made, and, vice versa, if the railway failed, the risk would be at an end, and the expenses would be a flea-bite divided among the numberless subscribers. 'O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint, agricolas!' The 'promoters of railways' who visited the provinces baited the trap well; always travelling with four horses, liberal in their payment of hotel-keepers' post-boys, waiters, &c., and ready to stand a champagne lunch on the slightest provocation.

All classes applied readily for shares; if a hundred thousand pounds was required, ten times the amount would be applied for; the whole talk was of stock or scrip, which was dealt in as freely as bank-notes. Applicants gave undertakings to pay the deposit and sign subscription contracts and subscribers' agreements previously to receiving their shares, and signed away as cheerfully as a young cornet in a cavalry regiment would write his name across a bill for half its value in ready money, after deducting six months' interest.

These subscribers' agreements, which few people read, were practically power of attorneys to the provisional directors to do what they pleased in prosecuting a Bill in the present or any future session of Parliament.

London solicitors who had old-fashioned businesses looked askance at undertaking railway enterprises, but plenty of others arose who did not do so; and many a quiet office would be removed to a large house and an increased staff be retained for the new mania. Engineers, and those who called themselves so, surveyors' clerks, and the commonest tracers of plans, found employment at absurd salaries. Quiet rural districts were invaded by a regular army of surveyors and levellers; keepers and paid watchers were planted to keep them off the ground, and many a free-fight occurred, as some of the invaders took a small detachment of roughs under the guise of chaining or carrying theodolites and

levels, to divert the enemy while they prosecuted the work. Those who turn to the pages of 'Punch,' especially the numbers for the years 1845 and 1846, will find the history of railways most amusingly recorded, for even Thackeray's 'Jeames of Buckley Square' was founded on fact.

At last the day for depositing the plans at the Board of Trade. and the Parliamentary offices, with Clerks of the Peace, parish clerks and others in other places, arrived, and it happened to be on a Sunday. Railway companies would not grant special trains for any promoters of rival lines; post-horses were forestalled in many districts, and in some places large sums were paid for retaining them in the stables until wanted. Such prices as were paid in olden times by runaway couples for 'horses on' to Gretna Green were nothing compared with those which were paid on this special emergency. It was frequently stated, and generally believed at the time, that some promoters who found their path blocked put their plans and documents in a coffin and 'ran it' as a funeral, and the documents were brought up in ignorance by a rival company. For weeks in Parliament Street and Great George Street, at private houses which had been engaged at enormous sums as offices, the gas never was put out, and one or two taverns in the neighbourhood realised enormous sums by having a double set of servants and keeping open night and day, and furnishing or sending out meals at all hours of the night. 'Do let that poor fellow go to bed,' a solicitor remarked to an engineer whose assistant was sleeping in an arm-chair, with his head on his chest, utterly worn out, at four o'clock in the morning. 'Go to bed, my dear fellow,' was the reply; 'if I let him go between the sheets he would not wake for a week.'

On Sunday, November 30, 1845, the whole neighbourhood of Westminster was like a fair; cabs, carriages-and-four, with horses in a lather, kept on arriving with documents for inspection and deposit, and from eight o'clock till midnight the Board of Trade was besieged; and when the clock struck twelve the exasperated crowd of depositors threw the plans through the windows, through which they were as quickly returned.

Mr. George Hudson, M.P. for Sunderland, was then the rail-way king. If a whisper was raised that he was about to take up a line the shares went up to a premium. To show what the wild spirit of speculation actually was, an offer of twenty pounds down was made, in the writer's hearing, in two places at once, to a

gentleman at a dinner party, for his chance of getting an allotment of shares in a railway company with which King Hudson was connected, and for which shares he had written.

Some of the papers warned the speculators of the risks they were running, but in vain. The offices looked so imposing, and the staff of clerks so business-like, that the vulgarity of some of the new directors who arrived in broughams, with despatch boxes, was overlooked, and they were set down as good business men, whose gaudy watch-chains and diamond rings were regarded as the natural outcome of sudden prosperity. Champagne luncheons and directors' dinners were every-day things, and the whole affair was only a repetition of Mr. Montague Tigg and the Anglo-Bengalee Assurance Company in 'Martin Chuzzlewit.'

Nasty whispers occasionally arose about the liabilities of provisional directors and shareholders who had bound themselves and their heirs by subscription contracts and subscribers' agreements, and in business matters old-fashioned solicitors, almost under their voice, asked—and meant to have an answer too—whether A, or B, or C was a provisional railway director. A little sensation was created by a prosecution of two men at the Old Bailey for fictitiously signing two deeds of subscription, but the speculators insisted on its being an exceptional case occurring through gross negligence.

The fears were not unfounded, as history proved afterwards, as the fact came out that behind the scenes a new race called 'stags' had sprung up who would sign any deed for half-a-crown, or even a shilling, per signature. The object of gamblers was to get an allotment letter, which was saleable, and was often obtained in a fictitious name to a fictitious and grand address. A was afraid to sign, B bought the allotment of him for a trifle and paid deposit if scrip was at a premium, and paid C, the 'stag,' to sign. Cautious men began to get out as opportunities occurred, but the liability attached to the deeds which they had signed remained.

Parliament met at the usual time—it was the year of the Corn Bill, and in the political world excitement was quite as rife as in the railway world. Members of all politics and of both Houses set loyally to work to meet the pressure, but never was such a chaos. Parliament was sitting in temporary houses; some of the public offices were outside the building; the Private Bill Office was at the top of Parliament Street; temporary committeerooms were run up with skirting boards in the lobbies; it was

impossible almost to find anything or anybody. Witnesses, to prove compliance with the orders of Parliament, were brought up from all parts of the United Kingdom, no affidavits being then allowed; many of them were of the agricultural class-shepherds to prove parish boundaries; occupiers of cottages to prove that they had not received notice, and the like. Some were enticed away by the opponents, some who had been hocussed came into the room stupidly confused with beer. There was little order known in those days, as no such rush was ever anticipated. To make confusion worse confounded, all witnesses in the Lords had to be sworn at the Bar of the House, and the lobbies were fairly mobbed. The leading Parliamentary counsel, whose profits were enormous, hardly ever went to bed; they were consulting till midnight, and at it again at five or six o'clock next morning. Lawyers, engineers, Parliamentary agents, and their confidential assistants scarcely remembered what a real night's sleep was; they might get a few hurried hours between the sheets, starting up three or four times, fancying they were at chambers or in a committee-room, and turning round again, only to find that it was time to get up, just as tired as they went to bed.

The lobby of the House of Commons at four o'clock was like a fair, every one hunting for some particular member who never seemed to come. Telegraph communication, compared with that of the present day, was almost nil, and towards the end of the day the correspondence, in the absence of shorthand writers, who were few, was a tremendous labour. Speaking in the first person as a witness who saw, and took a labouring oar in that busy session as a managing man in one of the mammoth firms, three things kept me alive and from going out of my mind through worry and anxiety, and they were as follows: first, a trip by steamer every evening to Greenwich or Chelsea at seven o'clock, and dining at some place where a decent chop or steak could be obtained before returning for a long night's work at nine o'clock; secondly, absolutely striking against any more work at six p.m. on Saturday, and going to the opera as regularly as Saturday came round; and, thirdly, a long walk on Sunday in any reasonable weather. I was utterly debarred from any other amusement or pleasure, which was hard on a very young man.

The scenes in the committee-rooms were sometimes amusing. I saw old O'Connell sitting on an East Grinstead Railway Bill in a temporary committee-room in the Cloisters on St. Patrick's Day,

with a mass of shamrock the size of a cheese-plate at the side of his broad-brimmed hat, apparently asleep, and, suddenly opening his eyes, remarking to a counsel who was speaking somewhat at random, 'Mr. Blank, I always sleep with my ears open.' I saw the late Mr. Beckett Denison sitting as chairman of a committee, in a room reeking with heat and steam, in his shirt sleeves. I saw old Lord Shaftesbury, the Chairman of Committees (and father of that Earl whose death men of all creeds and politics have regretted from the bottom of their hearts), told to 'go to the Devil for an old fool,' for simply saving 'I am Lord Shaftesbury' to a young clerk who was inquiring for the Chairman of the House, and who insisted that the real Earl was only a messenger, and not the 'Lord Chairman,' I have seen old Colonel Sibthorpe standing on the steps of the House haranguing the little crowd of business men in the lobby on the rascality of railways and all connected with them: and I saw daily King Hudson bustling in and out with both arms full of petitions and papers, joking and laughing with every one, slapping noble lords on the back, and hail-fellowwell-met with all. A few years later I saw his dethronement by those who truckled and pandered to him in his prosperity; and only some dozen years ago I read of his old friends making an annuity for him in his old age, and of the Carlton Club receiving him back and reinstating him in his old post as chairman of the smoking-room, thinking that his punishment had exceeded his peccadilloes as a speculator. I saw frequently Tommy Duncombe, the handsomest and best-dressed man in the House, pretending to be a Chartist, and the then Mr. Disraeli, afterwards an Earl and Prime Minister, leading the Young England party. I have seen Lord George Bentinck, surrounded by Lincolnshire farmers, discussing one of the great drainage schemes in one of the lobbies of the House one day with as much enthusiasm as he would watch a horse at Ascot or Newmarket on the next day; arriving in a carriage and four from Epsom or Ascot in time to speak on some question, the appearance of the horses and postboys giving pretty good evidence of what the pace must have been. I have seen Richard Cobden eating a bun at the refreshment bar, in the height of the Corn Bill mania, and a good-natured old Tory asking him if he did not feel the 'tyranny of taxation' as he ate it. Politics were hot enough then, but members did behave like gentlemen as a rule, and there was room for a joke; and in the House the moment

the Speaker rose to order men of all creeds and politics respected 'the Chair.'

The great commercial event of that memorable year was the final passing of the London and York Railway, the heaviest enterprise of that era. It was a feather in the cap of all concerned, as it was breaking down the monopoly of the then Northern traffic. One of the mainstays of the few remaining band by whose exertions that victory was obtained after two years' fighting—Mr. Thomas Coates, the Parliamentary agent, who had the charge of it from start to finish, and who only died a year or two since, much respected, in a good old age—said, within a year of his death, in a facetious, semi-grave way, to the writer, 'My sand is very nearly out; of course the world has forgotten it, but will you do me the favour—as you were almost a boy at the time, and are likely to outlive me—to remember that I passed the London and York Railway Bill through all stages in Parliament in 1845 and 1846; if one only who survives me remembers it I shall be lucky?'

As Bills were withdrawn or rejected, creditors became clamo-Those who had taken an active part began to look up the subscribers, and found that many of them had either disappeared or were men of straw, and when some creditor sued provisional directors of a company and got a verdict against him for personal liability, there was an exodus of all the heroes of the railway mania of 1845-46. The bubble had burst and chaos had arrived, and the 'welshers,' as they are called on the turf, put the sea between themselves and their dupes. Numbers of men of honour had to go abroad on being wholly deserted by their colleagues, and made the best arrangements they could without sacrificing their personal liberty; the grand offices of flash firms were shut up; hundreds of professional men of all classes were left with next to no remedy for payment even of their disbursements, and the only good which came out of it all was that the practice of Parliament was remodelled and simplified. Large fortunes were made by men who had solid businesses and substantial clients, especially by the Bar, the solicitors, and engineers; the system of railway extensions, although not without many hard contests, was fairly fought out, and has ended, at the end of forty years, in a kind of armed truce, which no party feels inclined to break, and outside speculators who start short branches in the hope of being taken up by one of two rival companies find their undertaking valueless. The 'confidence trick'

is played out; shabby fellows, who employ professional men, and turn quietly round and say that they have no client, are as well known now as 'legs' on a racecourse; and railway property, instead of the most precarious, has become one of the safest investments of the day. There is one solitary member of the Parliamentary Bar of 1846 practising there now; there are very few Parliamentary agents of that year left, and the solicitors who were conducting Bills in the railway mania, and now practising in Parliament, can be counted on the fingers of both hands.

Speaking once again personally from actual experience of the extreme labour of the Session of 1845-46, I may say that from the beginning of the sitting of Parliament in February, 1846, until the middle of September, when all the arrears of work and accounts were made up after the House rose in August, I do not believe that, excepting on Saturday evenings and Sundays, I had a single hour to myself, except for meals, morning or night; and when I went off for a month's rest in September, and found myself on the sea-shore at Ryde-which was then little more than a large village, with one street only, Union Street, which extended to the top of the hill by the theatre-and tried to persuade myself that the full enjoyment of land and sea and the glorious sky and air were my own, I felt that the previous eight months had been cut right out of what a young man of three and-twenty had a right to suppose to be some of the best of his life. I felt that I had been a puppet which had been wound up and oiled and put on the wires and worked and overstrained: I had never lived. I began to think of the vulgar scoundrels who were kings of men then, with their dirty hands and diamond rings, and who were scattered to the four winds of heaven, and to wonder that some of them had not stolen my watch; and I realised the truth of the old adage, 'All is not gold that glistens.'

CHRISTMAS IN CHIOS.

DESPITE the ravages of the earthquake, Turkish misgovernment, and the general decay which has set in amongst the Greeks of the once prosperous isle of Chios, it is by no means a bad place to pass Christmas in; the climate is seldom cold till the new year has set in, the gardens are full of flowers, the views over the mountains of Asia Minor and the sea are superb, and the plain of Chios, that paradise of lemons and oranges, is gay with ripe fruit, so that, like the inhabitants themselves, one soon forgets that whole streets and villages are in ruins, amongst which the dead still lie in unconsecrated burial, and that many of the living have no other habitation save the lightly constructed wooden huts which stand in blocks on open spaces, and which bear the names of the ships whose crews came to relieve the Chiotes in their distress five years ago.

Chios is a spot which teaches us how the cities of the past have disappeared; fine stone buildings only two or three centuries old are, since the earthquake, being left to crumble away; on and around them have been built flimsy erections, half wood, half mortar; the harbour is choked with fallen débris, and the old Genoese fortress by the shore is tottering in ruins, and a solitary cannon upon it looks as if it would bring the whole building down if fired off. The tall, elegant bell-towers of the churches alone have stood the many shocks, and the pious Chiotes are angry if any one suggests that this is owing to their elasticity; they prefer to look upon it as a miraculous intervention of Providence.

The steamer on its way to Smyrna deposited us on a busy quay, from which, after fighting with the Turkish Custom-house officials, we issued on to a tiny square full of mules bearing panniers of lemons and oranges. An apology for an hotel, called 'the International,' looks out on this square, and from our window we could watch the varied sights of the Eastern bazaar. Chios is the great mart for gum mastic; twenty-two villages in the south of the island make their livelihood out of the growth of the mastic tree, and the shops are full of quaint-shaped jars containing it. Furthermore, Chios produces endless varieties of jams, orange-flower jam,

rose-leaf jam, mastic jam; and so plentiful are lemons there, that they make jam out of tiny lemons. Whenever you enter a house

you are given a spoonful of jam and a glass of water.

The coffee-seller, who was constantly hurrying to and fro from shop to shop, was the object of our special delight; he wore a pink shirt, a green waistcoat, a red fez, and the loose blue cotton trousers of the islanders. This gay object carried in one hand his tray, suspended like a lamp, on which tiny cups of Turkish coffee encircled a glass of water; in the other the tweezers which held a live piece of charcoal with which to light his customers' cigarettes. He has no shop, only a convenient corner where he sets up his stock-in-trade, far less cumbersome than a London hot-potato barrow. He is a recognised institution amongst the mercantile Chiotes, whose appetite for coffee is unlimited. The Chiote bazaar is small, but exceedingly gay in colour, and far more comprehensible than the labyrinthine bazaars of larger Eastern towns.

We did not intend to remain longer in the capital than was necessary to make our preparations for a stay in a remote village; of all things the most despicable is life in an Asiatic town inhabited by Greeks, who assume European dress and manners which do not in the least become them. Greek taste, even under the most favourable circumstances, is vile, and is an interesting illustration of a natural law, which has ordained that art and artistic ideas should travel from east to west; the Greeks have tried to reverse

this order, and have come to utter artistic grief.

Two days before Christmas mules were in readiness to take us to the village of St. George, a good day's journey from the town. on the slopes of a backbone of mountains, which divides Chios from north to south. Here we were to spend Christmas-not our own Christmas, but a Greek Christmas, which, though twelve days later than ours, comes at last. The martyrology of Eastern Christendom was so complicated, the people so superstitious and wedded to ancient custom, that when the old style gave place to the new in Western Christendom, the Greeks preferred to keep their own, and in so doing they lose four minutes every year, which in the course of ages have mounted up to twelve days. There is no use trying to keep Christmas in the Greek islands according to our own style; we once tried to do so in Naxos and lamentably failed, for in Greece they fast for a month before Christmas, and our struggles to procure a proper Christmas dinner ended in hopeless failure. Consequently we decided for once to falsify the trite saying that

Christmas comes but once a year, and to forget that we had eaten

plum pudding and mince pies in Athens days before.

The day was delicious, fresh without being keen; everything looked bright and spring-like as we rode through the fertile plain : anemones blossomed under every olive tree, maidenhair decked every well, and if we had not suddenly been reminded of earthly woes by coming across a ruined village, over which our mules had to scramble with infinite difficulty, we might have fancied ourselves in the garden of the Hesperides. Here we halted for our midday meal at a shanty which had been substituted for the ruined café, and the men assembled therein overwhelmed us with stories of their woes, how the Government overtaxed them, how they had no money to rebuild their homes, and, as invariably happens in these ruined villages, every one has his own special earthquake story to tell you. One related how a baby was upset in its cradle, and, after remaining covered by débris for six days, was taken out alive; another related how an old woman had a hen sitting on five eggs in a basket; when the rubbish was cleared away the hen was found alive and sheltering five little chickens beneath her wings.

We were glad on reaching the village of St. George to find that it had been one of the lucky ones of Chios, and had been out of the line of the severer shocks; shaken indeed it had been, as cracks in walls and roofs testified, but the houses were all standing. We halted at the chief café, and in a loud voice called for the 'old men of the people,' that is to say, the municipality of the place (δημογέροντες). 'We purpose remaining in your village some little time,' we said when these high officials appeared; 'we seek lodgings, an empty house if possible.' You get nothing in the East unless you are peremptory and particular. I was taken to visit two or three empty houses. One, which had been more severely shaken by the earthquake than its neighbours, and looked as if it might fall any day, I rejected at once; another, which had been used as a store for gum mastic, stank so horribly of this commodity that we did not think we could enjoy Christmas therein. Finally a garrulous mother, with a large family and silent husband, offered us the use of her upper room, and to cook for us during our stay. She was a wonderful object to look upon, with a white turban bound round her head, the ends of which hung down behind; she wore a short blue dress, which came down very little below her knees; her legs, of magnificent proportions, were bare, and whenever she went upstairs she held up her skirt unnecessarily high.

Before we knew where we were she had appropriated us. She rushed up a hill with our luggage, and by the time we reached her threshold she was busy plucking a hen for our evening meal. After all we were fairly content, though we could have wished for a more sumptuous abode; yet the house in which dwelt Mr. and Mrs. Cross, which by the way is a very ugly name when compared to its Greek equivalent Stavros, had its advantages, for it lay somewhat above the village on the hill-side, and when we wanted recreation we could escape to the fields unobserved, and unaccompanied by a horde of children.

The evening of arrival in a Greek house is always a busy one. Sundry sweepings have to be superintended, insect powder has to be lavishly used, the camp beds have to be set up, and the use of each article unpacked has to be explained to the inquiring hostess, who has never seen such things before. It was quite dark before we sat down with the Cross family to our evening meal, consisting of weak soup, a fowl boiled to rags, followed by strong and pungent sheep's-milk cheese, and figs the consistency of leather, and only palatable when stuffed with sesame seeds. The Crosses only ate red caviare and olives, for they were fasting, but the wine which they drank was generous and conducive to the rapid cementing of friendship.

Echoes of home came to us early next morning before we were well awake. 'Surely they don't have Christmas waits here,' we murmured to each other; and on rushing to the window, which by the way had no glass in it, only a shutter, I saw a crowd of urchins outside singing songs and carrying baskets. Mrs. Cross was standing amongst them talking hard, and putting handfuls of something into each basket out of a bag; there was such a hubbub when I opened the shutter that I closed it immediately, and retired to bed until all was quiet. On descending I inquired the cause of this early invasion, and learnt that it is customary on the day before Christmas for children to go round to the houses of the village early, before the celebration of the liturgy, and collect what is called 'the luck of Christ'-that is to say, walnuts, almonds, figs, raisins, and the like. Every housewife is careful to have a large stock of these things ready overnight, and if children come after her stock is exhausted she says, 'Christ has taken them and passed by.' The urchins, who are not always willing to accept this excuse, revile her with uncomplimentary remarks, and wish her cloven feet, and other disagreeable things.

We found our time fully occupied this day in paying visits to the chief inhabitants of St. George. At each house we were given spoonfuls of jam, cups of coffee, and glasses of mastic liqueur. Once only was I tempted to chew some gum mastic in its raw state; I would just as soon lick a newly varnished door as repeat the experiment. One friend insisted on taking us to see his garden a little way out of the village, where the gardener was busy adorning a pole with flowers, of which more anon; and this friend had a farmyard to show off, and here we saw oxen with scarlet horns, which somewhat astonished us, until we learnt that on the day before Christmas every man kills his pig, and if he has cattle he anoints their horns with the blood, and thereby secures their

health for the coming year.

It is very interesting to see the birthplace of our own Christmas customs here in Greece, for it is an undoubted fact that all we see now in the Greek islands has survived since Byzantine days. Turkish rule has in no way interfered with religious observances, and during four or five centuries of isolation from the civilised world the conservative spirit of the East has preserved intact for us customs as they were in the early days of Christianity; inasmuch as the Eastern Church was the first Christian church it was the parent of all Christian customs. Many of these customs were mere adaptations of the pagan to the Christian ceremonial—a necessary measure, doubtless, at a time when a new religion was forced on a deeply superstitious population. Saints and spirits took the place of gods and goblins. 'What are the saints of the Christians,' says an old Byzantine writer, Psellos by name, 'but the gods of the "Iliad"?' Old customs attending religious observances have been peculiarly tenacious in these islands, and here it is that we must look for the pedigree of our own quaint Christian habits. We have seen the children of St. George collecting their Christmas-boxes, we have spoken of pig-killing, and we will now introduce ourselves to Chiote Christmas-trees, the rhamna, as they are called here, which take the form of an offering of fruits of the earth and flowers by tenants to their landlords.

The form of these offerings is varied: one tenant we saw chose to make his in the shape of a tripod; others merely adorn poles, but all of them effect this decoration in a similar fashion, more gaudily than artistically. The pole is over a yard in height, and around it are bound wreaths of myrtle, olive, and orange leaves; to these are fixed any flowers that may be found, geraniums,

anemones, and the like, and, by way of further decoration, oranges, lemons, and strips of gold and coloured paper are added.

On Christmas morning the tenants of the numerous gardens of Chios proceed to the houses of their landlords, riding on mules and carrying a rhamna in front of them, and a pair of fowls behind. As many as three hundred of these may be seen entering the capital of Chios on this day, and I was told the sight is very imposing. At St. George we had not so many of them, but sufficient for our purpose. On reaching his landlord's house the peasant sets up the trophy in the outer room, to be admired by all who come; the fowls he hands over to the housewife; and then he takes the large family jars, or amphoræ, as they still call them, to the well, and draws the drinking-water for his landlord's Christmas necessities.

In the afternoon each landlord gives 'a table' to his tenants, a good substantial meal, at which many healths are drunk, compliments exchanged, and songs sung, and before returning home each man receives a present of money in return for his offerings. A Greek never gives a present without expecting an equivalent in return, and we ourselves have been much embarrassed by this social law. On several occasions we have presented our hostesses with some European trifle, which in their eyes is a wonderful gift; with unseemly haste they will rush off to a drawer or cupboard and present us with an embroidered towel, a china jug, or something which we consider far above the value of our gift.

We will now pass on to another Christmas custom in Chios. which at once reminded us of home and the many bands and musical miseries which drive us to distraction at that time of mirth. There are five parishes in the village of St. George, each supplied with a church, priests, acolytes, and candle-lighters, who answer to our vergers, and who are responsible for the lighting of the many lamps and candles which adorn an Eastern church. These good people assemble together on Christmas Day, after the liturgy is over, and form what is called 'a musical company'; one man is secured to play the lyre, another the harp, another the cymbals, and another leads the singing—if the horrible monotonous chanting in which they indulge can be dignified by the title of singing. The candle-lighter, armed with a brass tray, is the recognised leader of this musical company, and all day long he conducts them from one house to another in the parish to play, sing, and collect alms. These musicians of St. George have far

more consideration for the feelings of their fellow-creatures than English carol-singers, for the candle-lighter is always sent on ahead to inquire of the household they propose to visit if there is mourning in the house, or any other valid reason why the musicians should not play, in which case the candle-lighter merely presents his tray, receives the offering, and passes on. Never, if they can help it, will a family refuse admission to the musicians. They have not many amusements, poor things, and their Christmas

entertainment pleases them vastly.

The carols of these islands are exceedingly old-world and quaint. When permission is given the troupe advance towards the door, singing a sort of greeting as follows: 'Come now and open your gates to our party; we have one or two sweet words to sing to you.' The door is then opened by the master of the house, he greets them and begs them to come in, whilst the other members of the family place chairs at one end of the room, on which the musicians seat themselves. The first carol is a genuine Christmas one, a sort of religious recognition of the occasion. according to our notions fraught with a frivolity almost bordering on blasphemy; but then it must be remembered that these peasants have formed their own simple ideas of the life of Christ. the Virgin, and the saints, to which they have given utterance in their songs. A priest of St. George kindly supplied me with the words of some of their carols, and this is a translation of one of the prefatory songs with which the musical company commence :-

Christmas, Christmas! Christ is born; Saints rejoice and devils mourn. Christmas, Christmas! Christ was fed On sweet honey, milk, and bread, Just as now our rulers eat Bread and milk, and honey sweet,

After this the company sing a series of songs addressed to the various members of the family, to the father, to the mother, to the daughters, to the sons; if there chances to be a betrothed couple there, they are sure to be greeted with a special song; the little children, too, are exhorted in song to be good and diligent at school. Of these songs there are an infinite number, and many of them give us curious glimpses into the life, not of to-day, but of ages which have long since passed away.

The following song is addressed to the master of the house, and has doubtless been sung for centuries of Christmases since the old Byzantine days when such things as are mentioned in the song really existed in the houses. This is a word for word translation:—

We have come to our venerable master,
To his lofty house with marble halls.
His walls are decorated with mosaic;
With the lathe his doors are turned.
Angels and archangels are around his windows,
And in the midst of his house is spread a golden carpet,
And from the ceiling the golden chandelier sheds light.
It lights the guests as they come and go,
It lights our venerable master.

On the conclusion of their carols the musicians pause for rest, the cymbal-player throws his cymbal on the floor, and the candle-lighter does the same thing with his tray, and into these the master of the house deposits his gifts to his parish church, and if they are a newly married couple they tie up presents of food for the musicians in a handkerchief—figs, almonds, &c., which the cymbal-player fastens round his neck or ties to his girdle.

Before the musicians take their departure the housewife hurries off to her cupboard and produces a tray with the inevitable jam thereon. Coffee and mastic are served, and the compliments of the season are exchanged. Whilst the candle-lighter is absent looking for another house at which to sing, the musicians sing their farewell, 'We wish health to your family, and health to yourself. We go to join the pallicari.'

In villages where the singing of carols has fallen into disuse the inhabitants are content with the priestly blessing only. To distribute this the priest of each parish starts off on Christmas morning with the candle-lighter and his tray, and an acolyte to wave the censer; he blesses the shops, he sprinkles holy water over the commodities, and then he does the same by the houses; the smell of incense perfumes the air, and the candle-lighter rattles his tray ostentatiously to show what a lot of coppers he has got.

We did not grumble at the meagre fare that Mrs. Cross provided for us on Christmas Day, for as she chatted to us at our meal she provided us with food for our minds, which after all is more enduring and profitable than that of the table; the mental Christmas fare that we enjoyed at St. George will be ours for ever, whereas the bodily feasts of past Christmases—the crackers that have been exploded, and the attendant jokes—have long since passed into the limbo prepared by nature for such vanities. Yet,

after all, Mrs. Cross told us naught but stories about ghosts and goblins; but these stories, when told by a woman of so quaint an aspect, and who thoroughly believed in them, were different from any such stories I had ever heard, and moreover they were highly interesting as proving the tenacity of custom and myth amongst these primitive folk. She told us much about certain demons which the people believe haunt the world from Christmas to Epiphany; these they believe to have the form of huge men with goats' or asses' feet, the descendants, that is to say, of the hideous goat-footed satvrs of antiquity. During their visits to earth they subsist, like the Amazons of old, solely on snakes and lizards; they dance at night, and enter houses by the chimney, so that Mrs. Cross, like a good housewife, was always careful to keep embers burning on the hearth during these dangerous days, or else the Kalkargari, as they call them, would come in and spoil all her food by their dirty tricks. At cockcrow they disappear for the day, and dwell in mountain caves, but not till Epiphany comes is the world free from them, and then they flee underground altogether, taking before they go a hack at the tree which supports the world, and which one day they will cut through. A popular idea, akin to putting salt on a bird's tail, is that if you can hit a Kalkargaros with a flaming torch he will become a man.

When once opened on the subject of demonology Mrs. Cross's lips were not easily closed. We heard in one evening enough about modern nereids, dragons, and lamiæ to last for whole nights of nursery tales at home if properly extended; but one struck me as particularly illustrative of Greek demon-dread as it exists now.

'There is a wood in the mountains,' began Mrs. Cross, 'far above the monastery, and near where the hermit father Parthenios has his cell, where demons abound in countless numbers, and none dare approach it at night. One day a bold woodcutter from Kardyà determined to go with his ass and pass the night there, having cut down all the wood he wanted. When evening came on he made on the ground a circle, in this he drew with his axe a lot of crosses, and within the crosses a row of mystic letters, and again another row of crosses inside these; in the midst of this charmed circle the woodcutter lay down to sleep, and at midnight the demons came and tried to get at him, but in vain. At cockcrow they all fled, and he set off home with his wood, all of a tremble from the awful sights he had seen.'

Genuine belief in the supernatural is so rare nowadays that it

was a real treat to hear our landlady's earnest discourse on the subject, and no more advantageous surroundings could be wished for than those which we had. The room was dingy and dim with smoke from the embers and from our tobacco. Mrs. Cross sat on a low stool with one child between her knees and others crouching round, with open terrified eyes. Whenever she paused she took the opportunity of hunting in her infant's head with surprising success. Her husband sat by in silence, and crossed himself when his wife related anything which struck him as particularly dreadful. The room, moreover, was only lighted in the feeblest manner by a wick dipped into a foot-shaped receptacle for oil, which was hung to a stick which could be moved from one spot to another at will.

Next day it blew a northern hurricane, as I think it only can blow in the Greek islands: winter had come at last, and we had no creature comforts with which to protect ourselves from the blast. There were only two courses open to us to pursue—either to remain in bed for warmth, or to take a rapid walk. My wife chose the former and I the latter of these two expedients; yet, in spite of a heavy ulster and rapid strides, I was long before I could make the blood circulate in my veins. These storms invariably last for three days, and during their continuance life is next to intolerable; we could barely warm a limb at a time with the apology for a fire with which Mrs. Cross provided us—namely, a utensil about the size of a flower-pot full of charcoal embers, which have a habit of going out if not stirred, and which, whilst burning, disperse an unwholesome odour through the room.

On the fourth day the wind went down, and we were in summer again. No Englishman who ever spends a winter in the Greek islands will again complain of the rapid changes of temperature experienced in his own much-abused climate. Taking advantage of the sunshine we went an expedition to a village in the south of Chios, a miserable, ruined spot, surrounded by the ugly, low-growing mastic trees, which may be profitable, but they are decidedly not ornamental. Here we had great difficulty in obtaining a room for the night, as all the better-class houses had been destroyed by the earthquake, and the great cracks in the walls of our room made us thankful when morning came, for we felt that a shock, however slight, would have brought the edifice about our ears.

It was on the Greek New Year's Eve that we returned to our more comfortable quarters at St. George, and found Mrs. Cross busy baking cakes, composed of honey, sugar, and meal; each household prepares these for the feast of St. Basil, the first day of the year. She was adorning them outside with various colours made from mountain herbs, and into one of them, called the 'Queen cake,' she told us she had inserted a coin, and when next day this is cut into slices, he or she who gets the coin will be considered the lucky one of the family during the coming year.

On the vigil of St. Basil groups of children were at our door again to wish us all prosperity and many years. On this occasion they sing songs called the 'calends,' long monotonously chanted stories about Christ and St. Basil, beginning thus: 'To-morrow we celebrate the circumcision of our Lord and the feast of the blessed great Basil; 'then follow various Scriptural anecdotes and apocryphal stories concerning Christ and St. Basil, and finally they wind up with 'many years to you,' and in exchange for their song and their wishes Mrs. Cross gave them mastic and coppers. Later on in the evening companies of young men came round from house to house, carrying with them a pole decorated like a rhamna with green and flowers, and hung with bells which they jangled as they approached each house. When darkness came on they hung lanterns to their trophy and continued their wanderings far into the night, tarrying long at the cafés, and imbibing far more glasses of mastic than were good for them.

For the feast of St. Basil, Mrs. Cross, like every house-wife in St. George, had kept certain fruits from the last season, melons, apples, and pears; some of these she put on plates together with slices of cake, and sent these by her children to the houses of friends and relatives. In return the friends and relatives sent back portions of their fruit and cake, presenting the juvenile bearers with small coins and good wishes. The master of every house on this day presents every member of his household with a small coin, which goes by the name of 'St. Basil's money'; it is not to be spent, but worn as a charm; and if lost,

the greatest calamity is supposed to be threatened.

I never saw so many little acts of superstition as these Greek peasants go through on this the first day of the new year. Mrs. Cross watched eagerly to see who would be the first to cross her threshold on the morning; this is called 'the stepping in,' and on one occasion she got a great fright lest a man, whom she considered unlucky, should come in; so she went to the door, filled it with her portly frame, held him in conversation for a while, and uttered a sigh of relief when he passed on. She then explained to me how there are certain people whose 'stepping in' is always unlucky, and

if any calamity happens to the household during the year it is always supposed to arise from an unlucky visitor on New Year's morn: those who have acquired this unpleasant reputation are never welcome visitors either on the first of the year or on the first of any month.

The liturgy on St. Basil's morning was very crowded indeed, no pious householder would think of beginning the year without lighting his candle and saying his prayers in church. The farmer when he returns from his devotions takes a pomegranate, throws it into his house before him, and as he does so mutters a prayer that his barns may be as well filled as the fruit in question; after this he cuts it up, and distributes the red seeds amongst his household. The woman who has a poultry yard has, likewise, important duties to perform if she wishes her efforts to be attended with success. The first person who comes into her house, if he is a lucky individual, is made to sit on a broom. Over his head she scatters grain, and says, 'May my hens lay as many eggs as there are seeds on your head.' Furthermore, if any one goes to pay a visit on this day he is careful to pick up a stone from the road, which he presents to the mistress of the house, and as he proffers this valuable gift he expresses a hope that her basket may be as heavy as the stone. She receives it as she would a handsome present, and preserves it till Epiphany, and the visitor is requested to seat himself upon the broom, and cast grain to the poultry to secure their fecundity.

These things and many others the superstitious do on the To them it is the most portentous day of first day of the year. the whole year; whatever happens to you on this day will go on happening to you all the year round; if you are ill, you will have a year of sickness; if you are lucky in finding anything, you will have perpetual success during the succeeding twelve months. am pleased to say all the Cross family were well, and that Mrs. Cross found a small coin which I had previously secreted in a basket with the intent that she might find it; and if my little plan did no other good, it gave her good heart to meet the troubles which must necessarily attend the poor mothers of extensive families during every day of every year. I am sure Mrs. Cross thought herself extremely lucky a few days later when we took our departure and paid her the modest sum she asked us for our maintenance ungrudgingly. As it is, we shall always feel in her debt for affording us utterly novel experiences in the celebration of Christmas and New Year.

FENNY.

A ROMANCE OF THE DOCKS.

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows, But not quite so sunk that moments Sure tho' seldom are denied us, When the spirit's true endowments Stand out plainly from its false ones, And apprise it if pursuing Or the right way, or the wrong way To its triumph, or undoing.—R. Browning.

'Well, Mrs. Eastlake, ma'am, it was Toosday—no, I'm tellin' yer a false'ood, it was Wednesday, beggin' yer pardon, Monday, seven of the hevening, when I saw her in Watney Street, a-dancin' to the orgin, like any ballot gal, which I've seen her do it with my own blessed eyes times out o' number; ' and Mrs. Crocker poured her tea into her saucer and swallowed it in monstrous-sounding sips.

'If she'd only take after Mrs. Sadler's Liza, three doors off. That gal is of a most reelidgious disposition. She's been in black five times to my certin knowledge, and the crape most beautiful—six inch deep—and she as respectable as the day is long,' replied Mrs. Eastlake, poising an impressive forefinger in mid air.

'Liza 'as the temperamint of a hangel-born; but that Jenny ain't got no more sense o' deceney than a Roman heathink idol. She didn't even lay a piece o' black on 'er green 'at o' Sundays when 'er aunt died, as I'm sure Mrs. Wiggs there can textify to it.'

Mrs. Wiggs, on being thus applied to, majestically rose to the occasion from the obscure corner where she had hidden the huge, hearse-like bonnet, nodding with ominous black grapes, which was all that could be seen of her. She solemnly prepared her speech, as if she were packing her words in trunks before starting.

'Wot I've 'ad to suffer from that 'ere gal, Provydents, and Provydents alone, can tell '—here she paused to allow her listeners time to take in her eloquence. 'No one would believe it—no one—not the two-year-old itself,' she continued, though why the 'two-year-old' should be especially credulous she did not deign to explain. 'Talk about black'—and here her voice became passionate—' d'yer think she'd make a difference, even for a corpse in the 'ouse? No, not the difference of a ribbin, nor a shred o'

black collarette, not she, even when I'—and here she touched her dress buttons with her thumb—' was alone with my last, and I've 'ad five corpses these four years, as nice laid out as Queen Victory's 'erself could be and this, my 'usbands and 'im buried so 'andsome, quite in style; that gell never so much as follered or took an intelligent, Christun interest in the grave—not she; ' and Mrs. Wiggs jerked a funereal thumb with a conclusive air, over her shoulder.

'Don't take on so, Mrs. Wiggs, my dear; you've done your best—'earses and black and all—and there ain't many as can say as much for themselves as you can. Five's more nor most, which I ought to know, though only 'avin 'ad four, and the last no better nor a brother-in-law. But I shall niver see the like o' 'is 'air agin. You could curl it round a sixpenny bit, and as soft as silk.'

But Mrs. Wiggs was not to be outdone.

'Wiggs's 'air came off with 'is illness, poor lamb,' she said.

'He died o' old age, did he not?' asked Mrs. Crocker.

'He died o' every kind o' disease, Mrs. Crocker,' and the Wiggs headdress bristled with severity tempered by triumph.

'Death is a upsettin' kind o' thing,' interposed the conciliatory Mrs. Eastlake, in a general and impartial manner that could wound nobody: 'it's so unpleasant to be all day long alone with a corpse.'

'That Jenny don't mind, no more'n if she was a Pagin. Lor', I begin to think Old Nick's in the gell. And after all my kindness to 'er, takin' 'er destitoot as I did, which niver agin, not if I live to be a 'undred, nor on my very death-bed, with niver a bit o' leather to 'er foot, nor a decent frock, let alone a apron, and I guv 'er my own pompadore dress, as good as noo, except for the wear at the seams, and just as I wore it, and never a bit o' thanks 'ave I got from 'er, though it's no thanks I want.'

'Never mind, yer've got rid of 'er now, and a good riddance

to bad rubbish, Mrs. Wiggs.'

'I dismissed her, which Wiggs would never 'ave let me keep 'er so long, bein' a sensitive man 'imself wot could lay about 'im, too, when he 'ad the mind. I sent 'er off afore 'er month, and I'm glad on it—right down glad;' and Mrs. Wiggs wiped away the furtive tear of agitation with her omnipotent thumb.

'I niver see yer so put about nor so down in the sperrits, did you, Mrs. Crocker? Take your tea like a dear, and 'ere's a mackerel wot I know yer always fancy, perticklerly done as it is to a T, and

as nice and shinin' as could be.'

The above conversation took place in the back-parlour of Mrs. Vol. VII. -NO. 42, N.S. 28

Eastlake's shop, situate in the idyllic neighbourhood of Green Bank, Wapping. She kept that mystery never yet defined but known as 'the chandler's,' and composed with beautiful impartiality of equal quantities of lucifer matches, ominous gingerbreads, and large, square, magenta sweets. But Mrs. Eastlake was very proud of her shop, not only because of its custom, common to all the neighbours for a mile round, or for its social significance as a rendezvous for the feminine wit and beauty of Wapping, but for its geographical importance as a sign-post used in directing confused strangers bent on finding some particular street. 'You turn to the right, take the second on the left, and then turn round by the chandler's: you know Mrs. Eastlake's, the chandler's?' was the invariable direction given in full confidence to any inquirer totally new to those parts.

Looking round upon the neighbourhood, on the tumble-down houses with their smoked rafters, on the shifting shadows and the turbid waters, on the brown sails and the time-stained bridges, on the far-away steeples and the groups of gesticulating dock-menmostly Italian-with their bright handkerchiefs, scarlet and yellow, tied in loose knots round their necks, you would imagine that in this neighbourhood at least such evils as an over-nice etiquette and a sated boredom were unknown. But nowhere (however unconventional they are in the demonstration of their feelings) is conventionality so rampant as among the uneducated, and Mrs. Eastlake and her guests recognised many more shades of precedence (generally regulated by the number of defunct relatives possessed by a family), many more degrees of proper sorrow at a death, or due exclusiveness at a feast, than Lady Clare Vere de Vere herself, whilst as for eventfulness, taking, as it did, the form of daily life from hand to mouth, its very excitement became a dreary routine whose slaves longed and prayed for that unruffled monotony which we should call tedious.

But no shadow of tediousness touched Mrs. Eastlake's teaparty. The table was laid for tea with the best green and white service, the horsehair chairs looked very handsome with their mahogany frames and antimacassars in crochet, some in white cotton, some in purple and scarlet wool, and the clock ticked fussily below the three perforated funeral-cards which hung framed on the wall, in memory of Mrs. Eastlake's three best burials. Besides, she kept very select company, and she was aware of it. Its selectness might be measured by its power of condemning sin

and error in others, and this particular assembly had gathered, not so much for tea and mackerel, which were but spicy accompaniments, as to hold a court-martial over a dire offender.

Mrs. Wiggs had just taken her first bite of juicy mackerel, and Mrs. Eastlake, having fulfilled her duties as hostess, was just about to flavour her fish by a remark that could give offence to no one, when a hasty step was heard in the shop outside, and the door of the little back parlour burst open. Into the room dashed a girl, or the semblance of one—she looked more like a Fury in Wapping costume than anything else, just now. Her frock-of a grey material, wearing here and there to a rusty brown-hung in tatters at one side, and the loose black jacket which formed its bodice only boasted three buttons, one of which was hanging by a thread; her thick brown hair was cut in a fringe that hid all her brow and dangled down to her nose, though it could not hide the fire of the long, grey eyes which were usually so vacant. Hat she had none, and barely a piece of shoe-leather. With flushed cheeks and clenched fists, she stood panting for breath in the middle of the parlour, before the three paralysed women.

'I'm come to give yer a piece o' my mind,' she screamed.
'Yes! yer needn't look 'igh an' mighty, and try to stare me out o' tellin' the truth! 'Ow dare yer say as I took yer wittles, yer old liar, yer?'

Mrs. Wiggs shook, as she afterwards remarked, 'like the haspenleaf itself;' her bonnet seemed to grow visibly. 'Imperent 'ussy, I wash my two 'ands of yer, when I know as sure as I'm alive and eatin' o' this fried mackerel as Mrs. Eastlake bought and cooked with 'er own blessed 'ands, which I think I'm right in remarkin'—' with a bow towards Mrs. Eastlake.

'You are, Mrs. Wiggs, my dear, which I bought at Parker's—not John, but Thomas—second after "The Magpie," as you know,' replied that lady, pausing on each word as if with a weighty consciousness that she had clenched matters by her evidence.

'There, yer 'ear wot she says, and I declare you've taken all the relish from it, as much as if I was a corpse myself, and me so fond o' mackerel!'

'Don't, Mrs. Wiggs, don't, my dear,' broke in Mrs. Crocker, 'maybe you'll fancy it after with a snack o' pepper;' and she smacked her lips in unselfish anticipation.

'Niver ag'in; that gell's give me the turn.'

'Why did yer say as I took yer butter, then? Tell me that!

And to turn me out o' doors without my wage; yer calls yerself honest, does yer? yer calls yerself a Christun? Well, then, I'd rather be a Chinee, or a Pagin. Yer not a Christun no more nor them—yer an ippercrite, that's what yer are!'

'Oh! did yer ever? and me with a Bible as big as a largesized hinfant, and Prayerbook to match, all bound in mirocey.

Oh, lor', it'll be the death o' me!' gasped Mrs. Wiggs.

'But I'll take my vengeance of yer, mistress or no mistress;

I'll get the perlice on yer for all yer 'igh talk.'

'Where's your clothes? you wicked gell!' interrupted Mrs. Eastlake, stung to bitterness by the thought of the 'miroccy' Prayerbook, which she coveted.

'They was my own,' the girl said, lapsing into sullenness. 'I pledged 'em, one and all, and much good may I get of 'em.'

'Oh! to think of it '—and Mrs. Wiggs rocked herself to and fro in agony of mind—'my pompadore and all, and the green 'at, which, being a misfit, I gave, though all trimmed with bombazine as thick as my thumb—oh lor'—oh lor'—yer a cruel girl—cruel!'

'Cruel! I know which is cruel—it's you! Where was I to get bread and shelter? I don't keep my money in a stocking. I can't eat my clothes. What do I want with bombazine? I want bread, and I don't get it; and you'd be glad if I starved, you would, curse you!' cried the girl, and rushed from the room as suddenly as she had entered it, leaving the three women speechless with horror.

But the sight of the cooling mackerel and the need of sympathy soon loosed their tongues. Jenny, meanwhile, rushed quickly along, reckless whither, so long as the evening breeze

cooled her burning cheeks.

It had been a sultry July day; the narrow, uneven pavement scorched like fire and emitted a double heat, crusted over with all its own dust and dirt which gathered everywhere. The very air, fresh enough in Kensington Gardens, grew sullen here, as if from all the hideous sights it looked upon, and lay over the houses like a thick, brooding wrath, whilst the streets steamed with a thick yellow vapour, fetid as fever and heavy with putrid stenches. The torpid women in the reeking fish-shops, with their grating voices and coarse hanks of hair, falling over their eyes and hiding their foreheads; the haggard cheap-jacks standing outside, their hats slouched over their brows, too languid even to cry their wares; the brown, rotting vegetables on their trucks

and in the shop windows with the broken panes—all looked dead and yet extant, with some grim, horrible, lower existence of its own. But even here, towards eight o'clock, a faint wind is trying to make itself felt, the saddest, sickliest ghost of a wind that ever tried to assert a languid existence; still it is enough to stir feebly, now and again, the long lines of old clothes, chiefly sailors' jerseys, second-hand tarpaulins, and oilskin trousers that hang, almost meeting, on either side of Cable Street, putting an uncanny half-life into the long, dangling legs of the trousers and causing them to flap in the faces of the passers-by.

Amongst them all tore the unheeding Jenny, till her rage left her with her usual pale face and dull eyes, whose vacant stare made her look almost daft. There was no expectation and no retrospection in her face-neither future nor past, neither youth nor age; she might just as well have been sixteen or sixty. And now the reaction from her fierce burst of anger overtook and overwhelmed her, and she strove against it as little as she had striven against its cause. For the first time she felt how utterly weary she was; her legs were like dead weights beneath her, which she could hardly drag along; her eyes felt as if they were set in lakes of flame; unconsciously she had walked right round and had now returned to her starting-point. It was nearly nine o'clock, and the sun was setting. But here his death is the signal for a new life—the gloomy side of existence disappears, transfigured by his glory. All along Green Bank, here softened by the shadows of twilight that lie soft and black athwart the narrow road, and there mellowed by the deepening light which turns the brown rafters ruddy, saunter pairs of sweethearts, bronzed sailors in motley costumes of many colours, with their arms round their blackhaired lasses, as gay as themselves with scarlet kerchiefs and flying ribbons. On they go, cracking jokes, laughing, scolding, making up again, just as lovers do and have done all the world over time out of mind. The old-new poet, Love, as usual, has turned everything, even the prose of the dark streets, into poetry; and the old folk have crept to the doors to enjoy the cool, half their decrepitude hid in the gathering dusk, and sit, some with work and some with folded hands. Strange sights are to be seen, for Green Bank is the promenade for people of all nations, who are never beheld all together at other times, and whom the twilight draws out by its peculiar magic. Here flits the ayah, ghost-like, shrouded in long white robes; there the bearded

Armenian, with clear-cut masque and flowing garment, is listening to a conversation between a stumpy, grease-laden Dutchman and a dramatic Italian, whilst from a little tumble-down eating-house at the corner, whose window is full of nothing but long Hebrew inscriptions (which, in spite of their scriptural appearance, express nothing more serious than beer and sausages), emerge a tall, black-bearded Jew, with straight features, a clear pale skin, and a long brown gaberdine, identical with Shylock's, and his wife, whose own locks are covered by a wig in strict old Jewish fashion, which deems it unwifely to show the hair.

But Jenny turned from them all and passed out into the High Street and on to the bridge near Wapping Old Stairs—the revolving bridge, which turns to let the ships pass underneath. Now all is as still as if it never moved, as if no impatient traffic ever waited to cross, as if no shouting policeman ever forbade passage. And here she stopped for a moment-why, she could not have said, and, leaning her arms on the railing, looked over into the water. It looked like a sheet of flame, now red, now burnished gold. All about her was light, for, if she looked above, she saw the fire still more crimson and deepened by the dark purple bars which streaked it. Far and near, the shining river was flecked by tawny sails, swaying to and fro, as if they were dancing to the music of the waters; and against the crimson clouds stood out the tall black masts, the blacker for the shadows. Jenny had not read Ruskin; she did not understand the beauties of nature, and thought the sun a very common thing, not to be noticed, but, all the same, a little of the quiet crept into her heart and a tear or two stole down her cheek. She wouldn't go to service no more, she wouldn't, to have cruel words spoke to her; she wasn't over-good, but she wasn't over-bad-not near so bad as many; she hadn't never stole, except for buying less milk and takin' the change, and that wasn't stealin'. Besides, why should she be good? She didn't want it; it was like fine clothesfor them as could afford it; it warn't her business, and there was no one to care. She'd always been a 'general' ever since she hadn't been a baby, and nobody minded her-lor, she hadn't ever had a mother, only an aunt, and she'd turned her out when she married agin, afore Jenny was twelve, and wouldn't have nothink to say to her after; as for Mrs. Wiggs, she hated Mrs. Wiggs, but she'd have a vengeance on her yet-which was all very bad, no doubt, but then, you see, Jenny-nobody knew her

surname—was no heroine and had not the faintest notion of such a thing as self-restraint; it had never crossed her to act except as her impulse prompted. And then, as she looked down into the quiet water, a sudden longing came over her to throw herself into it and be quiet too. Why shouldn't she? Nobody would ask for her, and where was the use of braving it all out? She would be cool and rested there. She leaned a little farther over; then she kneeled down and thrust half of her body through the rails, looking into the still deeps. Why did she move no farther? Perhaps because a remembrance came across her mind—a thought which still made life worth the braving, and, in another minute, took form in a burning blush, as a hand was laid on her shoulder and a loud voice from behind her said, not unkindly:—

'Darn the gell! yer'll be overboard, afore yer can say Jack Robinson.'

She turned slowly and looked up into the face of her interlocutor, a tan-faced dock labourer, unshaven, begrimed, black-haired, brown-eyed, whose open shirt and turned-up sleeves displayed a sinewy neck and arms, and whose broad-brimmed felt hat was pushed to a picturesque position on the back of his head. And, as she looked up, the daft look died from her face, her lips parted, and a tender light, half of pleasure, half of awe, was born there that made her look almost pretty.

'Come, look sharp, don't sit moonin' at me, there; I ain't the devil nor the Prince o' Wales neether, my dear, for yer to stare at me like that.'

She shivered from head to foot. 'I'm cold, Tom,' she said.

'Well, stir yer stumps and come along, then; I suppose my aunt's been a jawin' of yer ag'in. She's a tongue as long as the Mile End Road,' he continued, as she rose.

'She's a cruel woman, that's wot she is! I ain't a-goin' to stand 'er any longer, and we've parted company.'

Tom gave a long whistle. 'So she's guv yer the sack, 'as she?

Why, wot was up in pertickler?'

'She said as I wanted her witt'es, darn 'em! d'yer think I wanted to touch 'er beastly butter? I'm glad to be rid on her,' and her voice became strangled: 'it was nag, nag, nag, from mornin' till night, and she said as I ought to thank 'er on my knees, 'cos I 'adn't a name or a mother to bless myself with. I'd sooner live with the devil, I would,' she cried fiercely: 'he wouldn't nag so.'

'No, because he's a man,' and Tom chuckled: 'it's only the

womenkind as nags. Well, I shan't get my room tidied better nor you did it, Jenny.' (Tom lodged with his aunt, Mrs. Wiggs.) 'I'll say that for yer. Where d'yer hang out now, then?'

'I've pledged my clothes, and I'm lodgin' at Mrs. Renshawe's, round by the chandler's, and three doors off "The Five Ravens."

But any inquiry after her doings was just one touch too much for the overstrung girl, and she began to sob violently.

'Stop that, will yer?' and Tom shook her arm; 'old that 'owlin, yer makin' fules of us.'

'I am tryin', Tom; I'm so tired.'

Her sobs, by an effort, subsided; by this time they had left the bridge, and walked down the High Street to where it narrows. He looked down into her pale face.

'Come on, then, we'll turn in to the "Lord Lovat," and I'll stand yer a drink,' he said.

'Yer awful good to me, Tom, yer a reel Christun,' she replied, and laid her hand on his arm.

They crossed the road. Tom laughed. 'That's like the gals, they're for iver a-coaxin' and wheedlin' o' chaps. You cheer up, my lass; get a sweetheart, Jenny, that 'ud set yer to rights.'

She looked up at him shyly; but here he swung open the willing door of the 'Lord Lovat' and entered. It was very full. At the bar stood its mistress, with her loud jokes and bloated, purple face, ready to take a drink with anybody who offered. Tom shook hands with her and then turned to her companion, a long-fringed, oily-haired girl of fifteen with bold black eyes, and chucked her under the chin in much the same matter-of-course manner as Lord Thurro Bread would take off his hat to Lady Commiltowe. He ordered drink of her for himself and Jenny, who crept behind, and they turned and sat down on the only one of the dirty wooden benches at the dirty wooden tables that was still empty. The girl was in her paradise; light, laughter, company, a place for her and something to quench the scorching thirst that July brings, what a contrast to the dull, recking, parching streets where so many hurried by and none cared! The occupiers of the other seats were all dock-labourers and factorygirls, in their usual dress, a ragged black skirt hanging barely as far as the fragmentary boots below; a grey-stuff shawl crossed over the breast, so as to show a good deal of bare neck; and, in some cases, a tattered, slouching hat of black straw, bedizened with large brass anchors, draggled feathers, and tawdry red roses;

others had none at all, displaying to the full the straight fringe, inches long, which all wore alike.

Tom saluted the most of those present, and was answered—in the case of the men—by a silent nod, emerging from a cloud of the bad tobacco which they were all puffing; in the case of the girls by a 'good evening' and some piece of banter of a decidedly personal description, which was always complimentary to him.

'Well, Tom, when's the day?' asked one, presently.

'What day d'yer mean, Mary Dring?'

'Lor, don't fox; I ain't so green; when are yer goin' to church with her?'

'Here's to her 'ealth, Tom, mi darlint, and it's Kathleen O'Leary will dance at yer weddin', shure enough,' said another.

'I don't know what yer mean, gells, and I don't see no manner o' sense in yer chaff,' he said, rising and taking his pipe from his mouth. 'But I'm off now, so good evening to yer, and give my love to Kitty Wells and Rosie O'Shanter and tell 'm I hope I shall have a drink with them some other time,' and he went.

'He can't stand chaff, he can't,' remarked Mary Dring, 'he's

a rum cove.'

They laughed loudly. 'For all that,' said another, 'he twigged, safe enough; he ain't so green as all that, not he; I saw through his blarney.'

'Well,' observed No. 3, 'I laughed as loud as any of yer, but for all that I can't say as I rightly know why, for I never cotched the name of the young lady wot he's speaking to.'

Drat yer for a softie; not know Lizzie Driscoll wot lives at

the chandler's-niece to Mrs. Eastlake?'

Oh, that young gal with the red feather o' Sundays? I know 'er, well enough; why, I pass 'er a-comin' out every day when I goes to business,'—the speaker was in the rope factory for eleven hours every day.

'She's above trade, she is,' laughed Mary Dring: 'she's a waitress at the "Star and Garter" coffee-house, at Bishopsgate. She's cruel fine, I can tell yer, and sees no end o' gents, wot tips

'er 'andsome, too.'

'I think,' said another girl, in a loud husky voice, 'that now that sweet-making don't pay—times bein' bad, and old Bingsby a-turnin' off no end o' hands, I won't wait for him to give me the sack, but I'll turn waitress myself.'

'Bless yer, Martha, d'yer want Tom to keep company with

you too? You ain't nearly fine enough for a waitress or for 'im, neether. He likes a smart young woman with a Grecian bend. We'll 'ave him goin' to Buckingham Palace or the Inventions Exhibition for a sweet'eart next time. You ain't his sort, oh no! We shall have Jenny Noname here, wanting him next.'

The girl had been listening with all her ears and eyes-and mouth too, it would seem, to look at her as she sat there-elbows on the table, head in hands, and her half-finished tumbler by her side, drinking in their words, yet longing and struggling not to listen. A scream of laughter from the wofully excited company greeted the last sally, and, dazed and hunted, Jenny rose, leaving her drink behind her and stumbled out into the black street. So this was the end of it all. Why had she not thrown herself into the river this evening? Then she would have been happy. He was keeping company with some one else; a pretty girl with smart clothes; a happy girl who made money and saw grand sights and had plenty to eat. And he would never think of her-he, the only person who ever gave her a kind word or a kind thought; from whom, in her untamed passion, she would gladly have taken hard blows and cruel insults; he who had come to make a part of her life, he to keep company with another! And, stunned by the blow, she sank down on an uneven doorstep and stared vacantly before her into the darkness, utterly crushed by the horrible present. Of the days to come she did not think. That, thank Heaven, is one misery at least which the rich have more than the poor. The sensibility as to the future, the dreary power of foreseeing the long grey years to be, is the gift of education; and the same lack of foresight which causes improvident marriage and hopeless starvation amongst the uneducated, also takes from their sorrow the extra sting of prospective misery. For a long time she sat motionless, without a thought. Then suddenly all her soul was filled with a fierce loathing for the girl who had done this and taken him away from her, with a tumultuous jealousy which made her clench her fists till her nails ran into her flesh. and yearn, all unconscious of the pain, to meet her, fall on her, strangle her to death. Goaded by fury, she rose and dashed on. Then, all in a minute, a hope sprang up in her soul. Why should she give up yet? Why should she not get him away from Lizzie? How could she do it? She must think-she must plan. What had they said, those girls? That he liked a smart girl. Why shouldn't she be smart too? But then she was so ugly. Was

she so very ugly? She would look directly she got in; there was a cracked piece of glass on the wall of the room in which she lodged. Perhaps she would please him more than Lizzie if she were dressed nice and tidy. She would do it; yes, she would. But how? She had no money to redeem her clothes, and she didn't know how to look tidy if she tried; she had never done so all her life. Who would help her? Mrs. Wiggs hated her, and Mrs. Eastlake and Mrs. Crocker were on Mrs. Wiggs's side. She knew no other tidy woman. Yes, there was her landlady, she seemed good-natured, though Jenny hardly knew her. Still, she would ask her. She would beg her to wait for the rent, to let her work for her instead, or to lend her some money, perhaps; at all risks she would have tidy clothes to please Tom.

Mechanically she walked back to her lodging in the last house in Hilliard's Court, at the back of the Docks, and climbed wearily up the rickety ladder-staircase there was none-to her garret. It was pitch dark. She fumbled for the stump of tallow-dip which she had used at Mrs. Wiggs's and carried off thence, also for three lucifer matches which she had picked up at odd times in the streets, and with difficulty, for they were all damp, kindled the third against her old boot and lit the dip. She walked straight to the piece of cracked glass, which hung on the otherwise bare wall, from which the plaster was peeling and falling off, in damp, malodorous lumps. A bed, propped by a broom-handle and a broken-legged chair, were all the furniture of the few square yards of bare board which made her home. She held the lighted dip to the glass. Except for the crack, which divided her face into two, she could see quite clearly, and she peered long and earnestly into it, trying to persuade herself that she was prettier than the reality. At last she sighed and put the dip down: she might look better in nice clothes, and her eyes weren't so bad after all. Wearied out, she threw herself on the bed and fell asleep.

II.

Mrs. Renshawe, Jenny's landlady, had three prominent characteristics. The first was her passionate domesticity, the paradoxical result of a never-ending family, and her consequent habit of dating every event in life according to the birth of her progeny; the second was her astounding cheerfulness, which seemed to increase with every new arrival; and the third was her still more astounding faculty of doing everything at once, as if it were nothing.

On the present occasion, Sunday morning, she was scrubbing her youngest but two with one hand, boxing the ears of the eldest but four with the other, and somehow, in a way best known to herself, tidying her own costume at the same time, whilst she soothed the baby, who was screaming luxuriously, by a ditty apparently consisting of but two lines—

O lead—the Or-phan—forth Amongst supernal ways

with tremendous pauses before and after 'the Orphan,' though what orphan, and whether any orphan in particular, or only the generic orphan, she did not deign to explain. The walls of her room were covered with countless adornments; valentines framed in sticking-plaster, three texts illuminated in purple and scarlet. and whole legions of photographs set in gilt paper; Mr. Renshawe as a Billingsgate fisherman, Mr. Renshawe before marriage, Mr. Renshawe-in a billycock-after marriage, Mrs. Renshawe as a bride, Mrs. Renshawe with a blurred face and the first set of twins, and all the eight little Renshawes-beamed on you rather distortedly from above the mantelshelf. A table was pushed aside in the window, and a dresser stood in one corner, bearing in the middle a huge Bible and a model of the Tower of London, cut in coloured cardboard by Mr. Renshawe, and, on each side, exactly similar and carefully arranged pyramids of highly coloured teacups, turned wrong-side up; a bed fronted the window, guarded on one side by the Princess of Wales-in a sea-green dress trimmed with diamonds—resting a long white kid glove on the head of her florid and fur-belowed offspring; and on the other, by a Swiss peasant with startling legs and seven foot of height, ascending a pink mountain smaller than himself and topped with snow. The floor was strewn with children of every age, from six months to eight years old, of whom you could see neither beginning nor end. With miraculous dexterity Mrs. Renshawe disentangled them, one by one, untying their limbs, as it were, and proceeded to put them through a strenuous toilette. Mr. Renshawe, an utterly silent man, who could never string himself up to speech, stood in the house-doorway smoking his pipe, and looked in from time to time, opening his mouth wide several times in succession, as if about to speak, but never arriving nearer achievement. Presently Jenny entered, looking sheepish.

'Can't I lend yer a 'and with them brats?' she asked shyly.

'I thank you,' replied Mrs. Renshawe, who laid great stress

on the ceremonies of speech, 'and I take it very kind on you to ask. If you could take little Tommy.' Jenny looked hopelessly about. there were so many little Tommies-'that's 'im, a suckin' of 'is boots on the mantelshelf. Come down, Tommy, there's a good boy. To think'-with pride-'of 'is gettin' up there. He's a wonderful boy, that,' she said, in a loud, confidential whisper to Jenny. 'I remember when the fust twins was born, I turned my 'ead for a moment and he took 'em both and collared hold on 'em and punched their heads, just for all the world as if he'd been their father—and he swears and recites poetry wonderful, quite like a man. Tommy, dear, say your 'ymn,' on which Tommy began a jubilant mutter, with periodical jerks to show the metrical pauses, his mother beaming the while and the baby yelling applause. At the end, Mr. Renshawe appeared at the door, took his pipe from his mouth, and opened his lips three times, then slowly turned and walked away.

'That's 'is way,' said his wife proudly, never for an instant stopping in her combing and brushing: 'he's a wonderful man, my 'usband is; a feelin' man, who always thinks 'imself in the way. Now that's as it should be with 'usbands; but bless yer, they're not all like that. I 'ad two myself afore 'im, and one '—very cheerfully—'drank 'imself to death afore 'e'd been married to me two months. Annie, stand still, your 'air's a curlin' beautiful—and wanted to throw me into the fire, when in 'is drink; and the other 'ad a naggin' temper which breaks the camile's back, and none knows what I went through till the haccident brought 'im to the orspital—did yer ever see sich a curl?—and when little 'Arry was born, I said, "he'll take after 'is dad," and lor' bless yer, yer never seed sich a boy, just the same nag, nag, nag, from morn-in' till supper, and 'is arms as thin as pipes, which always was so, ever since I 'ad little Maggie.'

Jenny felt overpowered by Mrs. Renshawe's Niagara of conversation, but admired it, nevertheless. By this time the progeny were almost all clad. 'There's only the second twins to do now,' said their mother, 'never mind,' as they set up a dismal howl, "Faint heart never won," you know.' It was another of Mrs. Renshawe's peculiarities to bring out this, her one proverb, on every occasion, but no man living had ever heard the end of it. Sometimes it was reduced to 'Faint heart,' sometimes it was only 'Faint heart never,' but at no time did it get farther than 'won.' There now, that's done,' Mrs. Renshawe concluded triumphantly,

'and I'm right down grateful to you for lendin' me a 'and. I've never 'ad so much 'elp not since little 'Liza was born.' This encouraged Jenny to unbosom her plan of offering her services every morning in place of full rent, whilst she was seeking for work—she meant to take to trade. 'I want decent clothes, you see, and I thought p'raps wot with the little I've got by me from pledgin' my green 'at and my pompadore, and wot with the chance o' your trustin' me for a shillin' or two of your own, I could get one frock new and make it up, and I'll pay yer back my first week, word and 'oner I will, ma'am.'

Mrs. Renshawe's ready eyes had filled with tears. She also liked being called ma'am, 'Bless the gell, does she think I've got a 'eart o' brimstone? Does she think I'm like the ragin' buffalee of Injy?' In agitation Mrs. Renshawe always used the third person and became metaphorical. 'Doesn't she know that I've 'ad thirteen and two sets o' twins, and that I've buried five, and why'-very cheerfully-'many's the time we've been starvin', with 'im out o' work nine months out o' the twelve, and me with no tailorin' to be 'ad (and if there was, only threepence pay for a whole boy's suit), and no fire in the grate, till I've kept in bed for fear o' freezin'; wot! with all this in my 'eart, does she think as I'd turn away from the preer o' the orphin? Niver! Not if I was as rich as the Queen 'erself. And if I'd anything to say to Parlyerment, I'd do somethin' a deal more sensitive than make more Bills, as if we 'adn't enough expenses already with coals ris' and tea so dear. I'd build a house for the orphin, if it was the 'Ouse of Lords its blessed self. And I've an old print, with a mauve sprig, laid by, wot I bought just after little 'Arry was born, and which, 'avin' shrunk across the chest, and no use in pledge, you're welcome to; and as for the rent, William's in work just now, so I can wait till you've turned a penny, and if it's convening to you the lift with the children will be a mussy o' mornings.'

So it came to pass that on Sunday evening Jenny stood in her attic surveying her modest trousseau. Mrs. Renshawe had added a faded black cape to the mauve sprig, not to speak of a bandana handkerchief and the loan of her old bonnet, accorded when she heard that Jenny meant to go out. The girl set to work to dress, but soon stopped, absolutely ignorant of the way to effect her purpose. Presently Mrs. Renshawe, who now looked upon Jenny as her production, came to see how she got on.

'Bless the gell,' she said, 'why, you ain't got no more gumption

nor little Tommy. Look, I've brought you a pair o' William's old boots; they let the wet through, but they're better nor your own. If I was you, though, I'd turn back my fringe.'

'Oh, no. What? be such a reg'ler guy—all bald; it makes

me look so silly,' objected Jenny.

'Well, I don't think a fringe at all genteel or ladylike; you'd look double the gell without.'

But Jenny was obstinate. She would be more unattractive

than ever without it, she thought.

'Look at nice gells; there's Mrs. Eastlake's Lizzie, for instance.'

The girl turned violently round: 'I'll see,' she said almost

fiercely, and her friend disappeared.

She put her hair back with one hand—no, she looked uglier than ever. Tom would laugh at her for a guy; then she would kill herself. But if she had no fringe, she would be more like Lizzie. If he liked girls to be so—and, to the best of her ability, she jammed her hair beneath her bonnet. At last she was ready: she would have liked to slip out without notice, so that Mrs. Renshawe might not know she had taken her advice, but the latter was too quick for her. 'Let's have a look at yer,' she said, and turned Jenny round in the passage: 'why, you've put yer 'air back, arter all; you look quite fine; and I've got a pair o' 'is

carman's gloves-they give a relish to the 'ole costoom.'

So Jenny sallied forth, a queer little figure enough. Her head was half lost in a huge bonnet, like a coal-barge, and, irked by the unaccustomed shackle of strings, she had tied them behind, and they dangled down her back; the dress, far too long, swept behind, and the cape—the possession of one of the children—was equally short, and so tight across the chest that her figure seemed strained on a wooden frame; add to this the giant boots which hulked below the hem of her skirt, and the great gloves, which hung down over her fingers like lifeless worsted hands, and you will have some faint idea of the pride which she felt as she went quickly to that end of Cable Street where he was always to be seen walking on Sunday nights. Hope had revived in her; an intelligence had awoke in her eyes; she walked with a light, springing step; she might please him still. If only walking would put some colour into her cheeks, she might be quiteshe stopped, shocked at her own audacity—quite—pretty! Buoyantly, laughingly, she raised her eyes; they fell on two

people walking up the street before her. Unconsciously they came on, Tom and Lizzie, arm-in-arm, smiling, chatting, all unconscious of the tumult they were raising in one poor little girl's breast. It is not only the priest and the Levite who pass by agony all unheeding; love and joy and youth are often as cruel from sheer happiness, and they go on their way rejoicing, till their own turn comes. Jenny felt she could not bear this and live; see her he must, now that she looked her best; she stood in the road-way, just in their course; they could not but notice her, she thought. On they came, still laughing and bantering, now they must see her; but no, just as they were upon her, Lizzie pulled Tom aside to show him something, and he—oh, fiercest pain of all-he pulled her pretty pink and white face up to his and kissed her. On they sauntered past her, making some fresh joke as they went, and she, she walked on too, with head bent as if crushed by some immense weight. Ah! he would never kiss her like that, never look at her as he looked at Lizzie. And Lizzie was pretty; she had so many lovers, she might have spared her this one. She couldn't love him so well as Jenny did. What did she want keeping company with him? She wished-but she was too tired even to be angry. Presently she looked about her; she had walked some way and was close by Spitalfields. Close behind her was a church. Any new sight, any change would be a relief; any light after this utter darkness; and the organ was playing: she listened outside and began to cry. Timidly she pushed open the heavy red baize door and entered. The music had stopped, the preacher had entered the pulpit. She crouched down behind the font and looked at him. His was not a face to be easily forgotten; wan and sunk, as if with much labour; worn by the flame within which seemed to live on in the deep-set eyes that set the whole face on fire, and blazed keen, yet deep beneath the weight of the overshadowing brow, high and broad, from which the sparse hair grew far back in straggling locks, white before their time. Slight and small though his figure was, and, as it were, weighed down by his brow, he looked, standing there, like some prophet who loved his people unutterably and would fain kindle them to great deeds. The church was hushed, waiting for his word; and in the utter silence, amidst the dim lights and deep shadows, Jenny, sensational, superstitious, like all untrained souls, felt that something new and awful was taking hold of her and coming into her life. Then he spoke, and this was what he said :-

Greater love hath no man than this: that he lay down his life for his friends.' She darted forward. Why, that was just like her love for Tom; how could he tell? 'Lay down his life for his friends,' that was just what she wanted to do for him; how could he find out, that man in the pulpit, who seemed to know all things? Once she had heard that God knew all things. Ah! a sudden light broke in upon her, that was it. Sunday was called God's day, this was no man but God for certain, and the boys in white were angels. She had better go out as soon as possible, or God might find out she was there and be angry with her for coming because she wasn't good. Besides, she didn't want to hear any more. She just wanted to sit still and think about it. So she crept out again and began walking towards home. But peace seemed a vain hope for her to-night. As she neared the corner of Cable Street she heard a man's voice-but too well known to her-and the sound of a woman's sobs.

'I tell yer wot it is, Lizzie, if I see yer with any one o' those rubbishin' chaps agin, wheedlin' and coaxin', as if 'e was all yer 'ad a eye to, yer can just have him, yer'll niver see me, mind. I'll never speak to yer agin, never,' and Tom strode off. Jenny crept up to the other girl who still stood sobbing, she wanted to know what it was all about.

'What's up, Lizzie?' she said.

'Oh, Jenny! yer scared me, comin' up like that. It's Tom 'as flew in a rage, becos I spoke a bit to another gentleman, young Jackson, you know; and why not, seein' as my tongue is my own, I should like to know?' and Lizzie pouted her pretty lips. 'He needn't think as he's the only one who wants me; they're plenty more, and I shall speak to which I choose. But, oh! I am so miserable, for I like Tom best. But he's sure to forgive me, isn't he? He'll meet me just the same, won't he?' But she was speaking to empty air, for Jenny had long since fled, goaded by fresh sorrow, fresh jealousy, and a secret hope that the quarrel might prove the beginning of a rupture and of better things for her. But no! Had she not seen him kiss her? Oh, no, no; he loved her so that he would forgive her all things. And Jenny must go on without her sweetheart.

III.

Mrs. Eastlake was giving another of her select tea-parties, in honour of her niece's formal engagement to Tom Dennis, who had a fair chance of soon becoming the foreman of the new docks. So it was a good match in the eyes of Wapping. He had come that morning, in the dinner-hour, to make up his quarrel with Lizzie and to change the mere informal 'keeping company' for a regular engagement. Mackerel was discarded as too trivial for such an occasion, and had given place to the more weighty refreshment of slices of broiled ham with fried onions. Mrs. Eastlake, Mrs. Wiggs, and Mrs. Crocker again formed the party, the bride-elect being absent, although she was the unfailing topic of conversation.

'Yer niver rightly told us 'ow he asked for 'er, Mrs. Eastlake,'

said Mrs. Crocker.

'Well,' replied Mrs. Eastlake, settling herself in her chair and smacking her lips, 'he come to me and "Mrs. Eastlake," he says, "Mrs. Eastlake, ma'am, yer give me no manner o' incouragement with Liz."

"Tom," says I to 'im—no, beggin' yer pardon, I did say Mr. Dennis," and she blushed with great coyness, "Mr. Dennis," says I, "you're welcome to her if she will speak to you, for there's many arter her and young Jackson, wot plays the banjo beautiful and vamps 'ymns to the pianner-forty, is mad to 'ave 'er," and he got as black as thunder.

"Don't talk to me o' that darned jackanapes," replies he, a-roarin' like the bull in the Basin 'is blessed self and with a awful oath, "I've told Liz that if ever she speaks to 'im ag'in, I wash my 'ands of 'er. And as for the rest, she says she'll go to church with me, if you're willin', 'avin' been a mother to 'er." So matters was settled, and the gell's that fond on him that she'll make a fool on 'erself. I tell 'er as it's 'im must do the courtin', but, lor bless yer, she can't 'elp 'erself, and when he comes up the steps, she says to me, "'Old me tight, Aunt Jane," says she, "my 'eart's a-goin' a-flitter flutter quite orful," and he's give 'er a Joo's 'arp in 'lectro and she wears it o' one side, bein' fond o' dress, and,' tearfully, 'I've always brought 'er up in 'Igh Church ways, bein' myself a Ritchewalist to the backbone.'

She concluded with severe pride, secure in the argumentative conviction and infallible impression conveyed by her peroration. She was considered not only a guide to etiquette, but also a rare talker, partly because of her unintelligibility, and partly because of her well-known inclination to the Ritualists, of which she always talked, and which was always looked upon, as if it were some mysterious endowment, like the gift of tongues or of prophecy.

'Ah,' replied Mrs. Wiggs—the local authority on ethics—'it's well for Liz 'avin' 'ad you. You're a privy-ledge, ma'am, a privy-ledge. There ain't many as reelidgious as you, which is nat'ral seein' you are a Ritchewalist.'

Mrs. Crocker shook her head in mournful assent. She never spoke, and had gained a reputation for wisdom solely by shaking her head, which was her way of showing agreement as well as difference.

'Ah! don't say so, ma'am,' exclaimed Mrs. Eastlake, 'there's many more reelidgious nor me, and wot can use longer words and pay a pew-rint. There's Mrs. Sadler, as for heggsample.'

'You're right there,' acceded Mrs. Wiggs, 'she is a reelidgious woman, she always goes to bed at half-past nine, and never lets her son 'ave the key.'

Mrs. Eastlake felt crushed by Mrs. Sadler's religious superiority in the matter of early retiring, which, to her mind, counted as on a par with a parent's burial. There was a pause. Mrs. Wiggs, perceiving that her time had come, went on impressively: 'But where is reelidgion now? where, I ask of yer?' and she raised her thumb in the air.

'It's all along o' them hatheists,' put in Mrs. Eastlake, timidly, but feeling that silence would be a slight, on her part, to her Ritchewalistic gift, 'they talk o' sich things, now-a-days.'

'They do, they do,' and Mrs. Wiggs nodded three times in solemn succession. 'They stops at nothink. Why, they talk of a Soopreem Be-an! What do they mean by a Soopreem Be-an?' Oo's to account for the thunder?' Oo's to account for the lightnin', and why do some die young and some die old?' she concluded, with a clenching air of irrefutable reasoning.

'That's just it, and it's a great deal alon' o' them hatheists as makes me so anxious to settle Liz in a Christun 'ome with means. I ain't so long for this world,' with a mournful triumph that she too would one day make a funeral, 'and Tom's a good feller.'

'Well, I should like to see 'er and wish 'er joy afore I go, which must be soon,' resumed Mrs. Wiggs, 'avin' known 'erself from the two-year-old, and laid out her father which a real treat he was to do.'

'She's gone to the old bridge to meet a friend,' replied her aunt, 'I'd run and fetch her if I 'adn't to watch the pot; there's that good-for-nothin' Jenny a-passin' down the street'—Mrs. Wiggs snorted—' she might as well go for a 'alfpenny as idle there.'

'Don't let me set eyes on her ag'in, that's all!' exclaimed her quondam mistress.

True enough Jenny was passing. She had kept on her neat clothes; she would try and be tidy for Tom, in case he ever married her, or even in case he looked at her again. But she had angrily resumed her fringe; it was her not having had it that made her so ugly that he had never looked at her on Sunday.

'Come here, Jenny,' said Mrs. Eastlake from the door; 'Mrs. Wiggs wants to see Lizzie afore she goes home, becos she's goin' to church with Tom Dennis;' Jenny started and turned pale—'she is down by the old bridge with a friend, and if you'll go and

fetch her, I'll give you a 'alfpenny.'

It was on the girl's lips to refuse, but a mad hankering to see if they were together possessed her. She must know what they were doing. The sight of him was still the goal of all things to

her, whether it brought the thrill of joy or of pain.

She turned silently and went without stopping to think, or to look to the right or the left. Sure enough there they both were, on the farther side of the Old Stairs bridge, talking to one another, as if there was nobody else in the world. Stop! that was not Tom's figure; her heart beat faster; she drew nearer; that was not his voice; nearer still—she could hear what they were saying——

'Go, Dick,' Lizzie was speaking, 'I tell you I'll have nothing more to say to you; I'm engaged to Tom-I've just left him at

the forge.'

'D---- him,' muttered Jackson.

'And if I carry on with you,' cried she, 'he'll break with me he told me so ag'in this mornin', when we were talking of our weddin', and he looked as black as ink; I know when he means

a thing. I never saw him look so before. Be off, I say.'

So she really loved Tom, and there was no hope anywhere. They would soon be married—it was all over. She would not stay to give the message; he might come, and she could not bear to see them together. But what if he did come? A spasm suddenly seized her heart—what if he did? What had Liz said? That he would break with her if he found her with another chap! And, if he came now, he would see them together and never know that Lizzie had only met this lover to send him away—never know that—as Jenny, with woman's instinct, had rightly guessed—she had only encouraged him in the moment of last night's pique, and was now bitterly repenting of her folly. But he wouldn't come, it was all in vain!

'I've just left him at the forge '—Lizzie's words—darted suddenly into her brain. A demon took possession of her. What if she told him? She panted: he would never believe her. Ah! but why not fetch him—tell him that Lizzie wanted him and bring him to see them together?

Her thoughts, which have taken long to tell, had in reality raced madly through her brain, and, in less than a minute after Lizzie's speech, she was flying towards Green Bank where the forge stood. There was no time to lose. Jackson might go any

minute, and the chance would be gone.

Again the sun was setting over Green Bank, but it brought no peace to her now. Inside the forge, which also served as a kind of club, glowed the anvil, and a crackling fire shed a weird crimson light on the faces of a group of men who were throwing dice outside. They were playing high, and words began to be warm. Tom had just thrown the dice—they came down blank side uppermost; he gave a volley of oaths; at this moment a hand was laid on his arm.

'Tom,' said a breathless voice at his elbow, 'come, Lizzie wants

to speak to you at once.'

Only too glad to get a pretext for giving up a losing game, he threw down the dice-box. 'Oo's tied to a apron-string?' jeered one. 'Did'e want his sweet'art to give 'im' is sop?' said another; but, sullenly heedless of them all, he turned away with Jenny.

'Where is she?' he asked.

'On the old bridge, waitin',' she gasped; 'be quick, Tom.'

'Why does she want me, then?'

'To say somethin' very pertikler—I don't know wot.' She looked up in his face; a sudden tenderness had softened it—a sudden happiness had come into it and made spring where winter was before. She liked to see him so—she forgot, for a moment, that another was the cause, only remembering that it was her words which had called forth that expression. Then gentle feeling was lost in a savage triumph of presentiment. That look would soon be changed; he would think Lizzie bad—he would, perhaps, thank her (Jenny), and he would be—what? Ah! he would be wretched. She shivered; perhaps he would want to kill himself, like she had. Then, for no reason apparently, as suddenly as had come the prompting to fetch and ruin him, came into her mind the words of the preacher, as clearly as if he, whom she had taken for God, were standing at her elbow: 'Greater love hath no man

than this that he lay down his life for his friends.' But to make him unhappy—that was not love; and, in a minute, the picture of his despair and wrath and desolation rose before her. She saw him, black and grim, looking at her angrily, leaning far over the bridge as she had done.

And she would have killed him. No, she could not; perhaps those words had been God speaking to her. He would be angry with her if she did not listen; she must save him; she must lay

down her life -for afterwards she would die.

But they were so near—yet there was time, if she ran before. 'Why, Tom, old chap, I 'aven't seen yer these three months,' she heard behind them; 'here, don't be in such a darned hurry, stop and speak to a feller!'

Some one, a sailor it was, collared Tom from the back, and held him still whilst he spoke to him. This was her chance; then

there was time yet.

'I'll run on and tell Liz yer a-comin',' she whispered to him,

and, before he could answer, she had darted on.

She was close by the bridge; in a moment she would be across it—with them; she flew. But, when she reached it, she found a line of people waiting on the farther side; they could not cross the bridge; a ship was to pass beneath it—it was going to turn.

What did it matter? She must save him at all risks. She could fly across, before it turned, and if not, still, what did it

matter?

'Off with you, girl, are you mad?' shouted the policeman, 'the bridge is going to turn!'

'You'll be killed, simpleton,' screamed a fishwoman.

But she dashed on: she saw as it were a swirling, seething darkness; she heard as it were a mighty sound as of many men and many waters, still she flew on. Her head swam, her sight grew blurred, but she could see them staring, glaring at her, still standing together at the end of the bridge. She was nowhere near them, she must shout. She tried to speak; her voice was going; she could bring forth no sound. But she must! she must! Then, with an effort that seemed to snap her very throat, she spoke: she heard her own voice rising to a hoarse scream on the air, as if it had been some one else's; it seemed as if some one were speaking for her. 'Liz,' she cried, 'he's coming! Tom's coming! Go!'

She never saw how the girl darted aside; she never saw how

the man tried to follow, but was stopped on the other side by intervening traffic. She never saw how Tom arrived in the interval and Jackson slunk away. Her whole flight—a lifetime to her—was but a second to the gaping, screaming audience.

And when that second was over the bridge gave an awful groan, as if at the compelled horror of its task, and began to turn slowly and surely. Her head turned with it; she clutched at the rails with a wild cry, and struggled for life as all struggle in the presence of death, even though they have prayed for him. Another groan, a jerk, her hand was shaken from its grasp, and she fell, head foremost, into the yellow water.

'Tom!' she cried, in falling.

The foreman of the Docks'—to whom the gallant rescue of life counts as a mere nothing, and who weekly saves men from the jaws of death, without speaking, or even thinking of it—was pacing the Docks below. He heard Jenny's cry and saw her fall. In he plunged after her; safely he bore her to shore.

They carried her back to her lodging, her face as grey as her life had been, her long, dank hair falling over it and dripping on to the boards, her rags clinging drearily to her, to the last. There was no sign of life; her head hung like a dead thing over Tom's shoulder, whilst he carried her, as he had never done in life, up the narrow, creaking ladder, to the attic at its top.

They laid her down, and all night long they chafed and watched her, by the light of the flaring stump which she had held to the broken looking-glass on Sunday evening. It threw its coarse light on the bare boards heaped with dusty fluff, rotting vegetable stalks, and decaying fish-bones, the remains of Jenny's past and the provision for her prospective meals; it threw its coarse light on the grey face hanging down behind the broomstick which propped the coverless bed on which she lay.

All through that sultry, breathless July night they waited, and stood by her and hoped for her—Tom and Lizzie and Mrs. Renshawe, who had cheerfully given up her slumber and as cheerfully prophesied certain recovery, whilst she did most of the rubbing, applied all the restoratives, and was now and again encouraged by the feeble stirring of a half-breath within her.

At last, towards four o'clock, she heaved a deep sigh and her

¹ A character well known to the neighbourhood, and one to whom work such as the above is an everyday occurrence.

eyelids fluttered. Faintly she opened them and faintly smiled; they were vacant till they fell on Tom. She tried to stretch out her hand to him, but it dropped. He had fetched some brandy and poured a drop down her throat, pillowing her head on his arm. She smiled again and opened her mouth to speak, but no sound would come. He bent his ear down to her. Then: 'Die?' she whispered; there was a silence.

'Lor' bless yer, no, pore lamb, yer ain't a-goin' to die,' sobbed Mrs. Renshawe, 'not if yer'll take some more o' this,' and they

forced some more brandy between her lips.

'Am I goin' to die?' she whispered again. 'Is this dyin'? It's much more comfortable nor livin';' then, after a gasp, as Tom was about to withdraw his arm, she shook her head slowly and pulled him towards her. 'I can die easier so,' she said.

The room was still again; the tallow spluttered and ran down

on to the bed.

'Tom'—she spoke again, and louder this time—'Tom, kiss me!' Without a word he stooped and kissed her on the forehead, and she smiled into his eyes. Then she closed her own.

Into the garret, through the broken pane, crept the dawn; a great hush, as of awe at an expected guest, filled the room; the bare walls seemed all at once holy; the very fluff and fish-bones were touched with dignity, for the Angel of Death and of Birth had entered.

Lizzie had dropped down beside the bed, and was crouching

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there stifling her sobs. Mrs. Renshawe was at its foot.

'Give 'er a drop more,' said Tom, who still stood upholding Jenny's head with his arm. 'She's tryin' to speak.' Again he bent his ear. 'She's sayin' somethin' about love and layin' down life. I can't understand,' he said. His arm was cramped from his unchanged position; he knelt down beside Lizzie, to ease his pain, and took hold of his weeping sweetheart's hand.

Jenny opened her grey eyes again to their full extent, they

were no longer vacant.

The dawn grew.

'Friend—love——,' she murmured, groping towards their bowed heads; then her eyelids fell too.

Through the window came the morning, flooding the room with a red light; bathing all the dust and dirt and rubbish in its glory. It fell on the white face, like the smile of God; for the sun had risen in the East.

CHEAP SUNSHINE.

YES—that was what we were seeking last winter—Cheap Sunshine! Not in England of course—such a commodity is not to be had there between November and March for uncounted gold—but on the Riviera, the Riviera di Ponente.

Oh, what a superior smile irradiates the countenances of my travelled readers as their eyes catch the words 'cheap sunshine!' 'Cheap sunshine! Anything cheap on the Riviera!! [Lay a terrific stress on anything, please.] What an absurd idea! Why, every one knows that the shores of the Mediterranean are only for people with long purses. Cheap sunshine, too—what a vulgar

expression! What does the writer mean by it?'

Well, perhaps our superior readers are right here. 'Cheap Sunshine' has a common selling-off sound; and once I thought of entitling this paper 'An Unfrequented Spot on the Riviera,' and concocting a serious improving guide-book account of a certain place 'down south,' where one has not to pay fifteen francs a day for leave to live without coughing. But I gave it up, the task was beyond me; and with a sigh of relief I snatched my pen, restored my expressive little vulgar title to favour, and sate me down to tell you all, dear moderate-incomed friends, about my search for 'Cheap Sunshine on the Riviera.'

All the well-known haunts of British sun-lovers were of course 'taboo' to three people who found themselves unable comfortably to pay more than 100 francs a week (4l.) for their joint maintenance. A trifle over for such extras as wine, firing, &c., might be conceded, but the weekly bill must not exceed the 100 francs: that A, B, and C were firm upon. This decision completely excluded such places as Cannes, Nice, Mentone, &c., from consideration. Less fashionable must be the spot we steered for.

'Try Alassio,' was a piece of advice tendered at this time by a knowing friend. And so to Alassio, a sweet little olive-shaded town on the tideless sea, we at first directed our steps. There were three hotels. We stayed a week at each. Two of them treated us most kindly, imploring us to remain the winter through, and promising we should have every comfort for six or seven francs per diem. But, no; we shook our heads, took some lovely

walks, rejoiced in the perfect stretch of bright water, worshipped in the pretty little English church, palm-decorated for Christmastide; and, bidding our kind host a regretful farewell, drove a few miles

farther eastward along the coast to Albenga.

Such a quaint little town, backed by a glorious show of white snow-capped mountains. C, who was a sketcher, was wild with rapture at sight of the curious square towers which reared themselves everywhere in the walled city. Here we were received with rapture by mine host of the 'Hôtel Albenga.' He was prepared to take us on our own terms; and we resolved to commit. ourselves for a time to his keeping. Cæsar and Katerina-his man and maid-were overjoyed to welcome us. We were not daunted by finding that there was not another lodger in the hotel save ourselves, and we cheerfully took possession of three bedrooms and a stone-floored sitting-room. Here at last we had surely found cheap sunshine!

Later on in the day our first doubt came to the surface. The sun does set on the Riviera; and we had been wont to indulge ourselves in an evening with a bright little wood-fire, but the luxury of a grate, or even of a stove, was here conspicuous by its absence. Fire at all of any sort was denied us. A, B, and C looked at each other in chill distrust of circumstances. Host and maid and man saw the look and guessed the cause. The ladies would find the rooms perfectly warm; and if not, why ashes could certainly be had from the baker. Ashes from the baker! The embers from his oven! Yes, dear readers, to that depth we fell, I confess, our sole warming apparatus consisting of hot wood ashes fetched daily from the baker, and thrust into a sort of pillarbox erected for the purpose in a corner of the room.

Of course, we left on the morrow! But, no; we did not. The weather was not very cold-we could manage to stay our week out—and there was so much to be seen in the neighbourhood.

Well, and we did stay, not only our eight days, but five whole weeks longer; and A with her bronchitis, B with her pen and ink, and C with her paint box, never felt better or happier in their lives; though the 'best cook on the Riviera,' as we were assured our host was, showed his talent chiefly by improvising dinner for three out of a handful of tiny fish, half a pound of steak, an omelette, and a few dried pears, served by Cæsar with much pomp and flourish of serviettes.

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When the cold was severe, and the wind did blow down from

those glittering snow mountains, Katerina would enter our sittingroom with an armful of hot-water bottles, which we nursed or used as footstools, addenda to the warming powers of the baker's ashes.

When we could go out there was plenty to be seen within and without the town: churches, towers, Roman remains, &c. On the slope of the nearest hill a lovely little ruined church prayed to be sketched; and, following the course of the turbid river, we easily reached a baby walled-city, curious to explore and sketchable too. To another sight—a weird river, wide and almost streamless— Katerina conducted us. Here the high clay banks were sown with fossil shells, difficult to extricate, but treasures to geologists and antiquaries. How Katerina enjoyed the chase after a perfect shell! She was the most successful curiosity-hunter of all: barefooted, and armed only with an old knife. Those excursions were delightful to her. She liked us, I believe, and pitifully declared that all her life was clouded over when we made up our minds at last that, interesting as Albenga proved itself, we had not yet found 'Cheap Sunshine,' and must seek it farther on. Or rather our sunshine had been too much diluted by cold wind altogether to satisfy us.

"Where will the ladies go then—to England?' asked our despondent femme de chambre.

But, no. A, B, and C shook their heads sagaciously. The search for Cheap Sunshine was not yet over. B and C had once or twice made little excursions, by rail and road, from Albenga to places in the vicinity; and now, when the rattling, shaking country carriage conveyed the party to the station by the sea, a short word was pronounced, and three tickets given to the Signorinas for Noli.

Noli! Yes; they had gauged the resources of the little unknown fishing village, and here at last they were going to find Cheap Sunshine!

Still on the lovely coast line, but nestled snugly down in a baby bay, guarded by a ruined castle on the eastern heights, smiled the unpretending settlement.

A stout girl was standing on the platform as the train drew up: Giovanna, 'the maid of the inn.'

'This way!' she said; and with comprehensive grasp seized all the possessions under which we were staggering as if they were a bagatelle. 'This way, ladies. I will conduct you by the short road.'

Noli was too primitive for omnibuses or cabstands, so we followed our guide on foot, after making sure that our luggage would be sent after us to the 'Albergo del Sole.' A good name; but had any civilised foot trodden the stone floor and dark staircase of this ancient albergo before our own? We asked ourselves the question as mine host, an old fisherman, doffed his Phrygian cap and bade us kindly welcome. Giovanna hastened to assure us that an English gentleman-an artist-had occupied our suite of rooms last year. Here they were; behold! We did behold: a stone-floored dining-room, flanked on either side by our bedrooms, all three with tiled floors, one without any window at all. But, when you did get a window, how lovely was the view over the blue Mediterranean; and how interesting the sunny beach, immediately below us, dotted with little boats and fisher people. for the albergo was literally built on the sand. It formed part, in fact, of the sea wall of the little town.

Well, we settled in, determined to put up with all shortcomings provided we got our sunshine. There was one open fireplace, too, in the 'best' bedroom which could be used in the evenings, so we

should not be so badly off whatever happened.

'It is rather dark for unpacking, said C, who occupied the windowless apartment, which was solely lighted by doors into B's room and the dining-room, and which possessed, high up on the wall, an iron-barred grid into another darker chamber tenanted

by Giovanna. All very friendly and Italian!

Dinner was served comfortably, if simply. The old fisherman was the cook. Soup, two meats, and a 'dolce,' or sweet; excellent Gorgonzola to follow, and good red wine. As we are on the food topic, we may as well chronicle the rest of the meals. Breakfast: coffee, rather tough rolls and butter. Lunch: one hot meatgenerally a beef-steak-and a dolce. A superior dolce this-a sort of lemon custard, very fresh and good. The old fellow in the Phrygian cap made this too. At the end of the week he sent us a message by Giovanna. Did the ladies mean to stay another week? because, if so, he would go to Savona and buy more Gorgonzola and another dolce for dinner. The dinner dolce was nothing but a large well-made sponge cake, iced and ornamented, and cut into triangular slices. We liked it, but hardly to the extent our landlord deemed it fitting we should, for he never provided any other. We stayed three weeks with him and had oneand-twenty lemon custards, and one-and-twenty triangular slices

of trimmed sponge cake, each to our own share. We provided our own afternoon tea, and when the tea ran short we made an effort to procure more.

'There might be some in the town. The chemist once had

some,' said Giovanna thoughtfully.

We sent her to buy a quarter of a pound. She returned with an evil-smelling compound in a paper, all the chemist had of tea. When infused, it tasted worse than it smelt; price, 3 francs the screw. We drank and shuddered. Giovanna watched.

'The ladies do not like it; it shall go back.' And back she carried the composition, for it was not tea.

'Change it for sugar,' we cried after her; and it was done.

We then sent to Florence for tea by post; and by sample post also came, from a compassionate friend in England who had guessed our need, a little calico bag containing two ounces of ordinary tea, which just filled up the gap till the Florence tea arrived. You perceive that Noli itself does not drink tea.

The furnishing of our rooms was of course of the simplest: just tables, chairs, and beds of the leaves of the Indian corn. Immense

beds these were, capable of holding four or five persons.

The whole staff of the hotel consisted of Pedro the fisherman, his little daughter of thirteen, and Giovanna his servant; the mistress, Pedro's wife, had only been dead a short time. I forgot to state that the hotel is the village ale- or rather wine-house, and that every one enters by the one door leading through the kitchen, where some half-dozen fishermen are generally to be found peaceably consuming a little thin wine, most of them in charge of a baby at the same time. Babies are worshipped in this part of Italy, and the father is only too proud to carry a small swaddled mummy about with him whenever he is not at work.

But now to go without the walls of our hotel. C was in ecstasies at once. Such views! A castle on this hill, a church on the other, and the coast road displaying such rocks and coves and tender little 'bits' for a ready pencil. Oh, there must be sunshine at Noli! And there was. As I said before, we stayed three weeks in the place, exploring, sketching, and making friends with the peasants. Of society there was none, and we had soon read our books; but the beach was a story in itself, with the constant fishing going on in the bay, and the rush to the edge of the water to draw in the boats. Every one helped: men, women, and

little children tugging at a long rope. And then the excitement to see what was caught. If a good haul, a mass of shining little fishes, which were afterwards dried in the sun for Lent consumption. We hardly ever could get fresh fish ourselves; they were needed for the villages up the country, we were told. The people of the place were very poor. Giovanna said this fishing was their sole support. Antonio had gone away to South America; he could not stand it. Who was Antonio? Her sposo. Of course the ladies had sposi too? No? Not even the Signora C with the yellow hair? Ah, how curious! Well, yes, Toni had gone, and she was very miserable; for, of course, he would see some girl out there he liked better than her, and then he would never care more for his poor Giovanna.

Giovanna was of a melancholy turn of mind. We found her weeping copiously one day. What was the matter? Her stepmother had just had a new baby. Well, was that a crying matter? Yes; for now her last wages must go. The family are dreadfully poor, and you can't let the children starve while the mother is laid by. The father has caught positively no fish of late.

We tried to console the weeping maiden, but she refused comfort. It was always like that: there was always a baby. She never could lay by anything; and you couldn't expect Antonio to take her with positively no dot. The poor girl really had her troubles.

On Sunday we told her we should require very little waiting on, so she could go to church. She laughed. Oh no, she never went to church when there was company. What should she go for? Of course, she might go to confession; but what use? When you were at work all the week you couldn't sin. She should have nothing to confess. If the ladies could spare her, she would go and see the new baby. With all her lamentations over its coming, Giovanna was ready to do her share of baby-worship in the poor home.

The town itself is of the usual narrow-streeted type common to Italy; a high tower springing up in the midst of the houses: a landmark at sea. We did not much frequent the alleys with the bright beach and sunny coast road inviting us; but we often visited the post, for B had manuscripts, and C sketches, to send home continually. After the first week the officials, a man and an old woman, began to exhibit signs of uneasiness; and at last we gathered the cause. We had consumed the whole available stock of stamps, except those of one and two centimes. They had

sent for more, but they had not come. For ten days we had to cover the whole face of our envelopes with these wretched little stamps of less than a half-farthing value, so that there was hardly room for the direction. Such letter-writers had never been known before in Noli, and quite upset the arrangements of a public office.

We had been told that the peasants around Noli were rough, that the country was unsafe, and that there might be brigands on the mountains; but we wandered about for miles, 'unprotected females,' and experienced nothing but civility and friendliness. 'Cara mia, you are not on the right road,' was the gentle observation of an old peasant to C one day when in doubt as to her route; and, 'We are the only brigands,' said a cheerful coastguardsman to B when she asked his opinion as to these marauders lurking near.

The winter was an exceptionally cold, wet, ungenial one all over the continent; but Noli was so sheltered that it was possible to go out in all weathers, save perhaps pouring rain. The coast road, westward, was a dream of beauty: a lovely part of the ever-

lovely Corniche road.

After a while some of us began to long for books, for congenial society, but never for anything lovelier than Noli. The evenings were still long. A stitched, C touched up drawings, and B (by request) read aloud what she had written in the day. Her audience was appreciative, but such literature was necessarily scanty. Conversation chiefly turned on what Noli might be if some capable person would take it up. A rising physician for instance-Dr. Bennett made Mentone-or a clergyman who would give a Sunday service, or an enterprising Englishwoman who would take a comfortable house on the beach and turn it into a plain cozy pension. There was such a house-empty; a perfect suntrapto be let. Should we take it and turn landladies? If B hadn't been so busy writing, and C sketching, it would have been a delightful speculation; but A didn't seem to fancy taking the entire responsibility, so the project fell through as regarded this trio. Still it is worth consideration. Noli is still needing some one to introduce it to winterers abroad; that green-shuttered house still waits a tenant. Who will have the pluck to start the little fishing town, or village, as an English resort? It is on the direct railway line between Nice and Genoa, so supplies of such things (and they would be many) that the place could not produce could easily be procured.

We throw the glove down to the spirited and enterprising.

THE MARQUIS DE BRUNOY.

ABOUT thirteen miles from Paris, on the railway to Lyons and Marseilles, is the picturesque village of Brunoy. The village, which has a population of about 1,300 inhabitants, stands on the banks of the winding little river Yerès, an affluent of the Seine, and is buried in the midst of umbrageous woods. It has extensive nurseries of fruit and forest trees, and boasts a few villa residences, one of which belonged to Talma the tragedian, a cotton-spinning factory, and the barely discernible remains of an old tower, sole relic of the castle where Philip of Valois resided in 1346. The lands of Brunov are said to have been given by King Dagobert to the Abbey of St. Denis, which he founded in 636. They were for some time in the family of De la Rochefoucauld, whence they passed into the hands of Brunet, a financier, who, after having built a château here, sold the whole property in 1722 to Montmartel Paris, or Paris de Montmartel as he was afterwards called, in whose favour Brunoy was created into a marquisate by Louis XV. He left one son and heir, the Marquis of Brunoy, who disappeared, and Brunoy then passed into the hands of the Count de Provence, who afterwards, as Louis XVIII., conferred the title upon the illustrious Duke of Wellington.

Perhaps the curious traveller, wandering into the dilapidated little church of St. Médard, which received scant mercy at the hands of the 'patriots' in 1793, might be struck by the extraordinary mixture of styles which it displays; a chapel transmogrified into a church with nave, side aisles, &c., and by its queer windows, rose and white marble floor, pretentious porch, and gaudy fragments of decorations in gilding, plaster, glass, &c.; but he would scarcely suspect that this church and the one cracked bell in its belfry is all that remains to tell of extravagances and follies which but little more than a century ago

made Brunoy famous throughout France.

The story of the Marquis, whose eccentricities made this little place notorious for a time, and who is said to have eventually disappeared in a mysterious manner, is so curious that it deserves telling.

There were four brothers of the name of Paris, sons of an innkeeper at Moras, in Dauphiné. The eldest was Antoine, the

second La Montagne-so called after the sign of his father's inn. 'L'Auberge de la Montagne'-the third was named Duverney, and the fourth Montmartel. About 1701 there was great scarcity in Dauphiné, which the brothers promptly relieved by largely importing grain from Burgundy. Instead of being thanked, however, they were accused of having caused the scarcity for their own ends, and were obliged to flee the country and go to the capital. Here Duverney Paris entered the Garde Royale, and his three brothers obtained posts in the service of the contractor for the provisioning of the army of Italy, to whom they had been useful in Dauphiné. They rapidly rose to eminence as army contractors and financiers, and amassed large fortunes. Antoine had the chief direction of provisioning the army of Flanders. Duverney was so convinced of the fallacy of the schemes of the famous Law, that he presented a memorial to the Regent in which he pointed out their illusive features; but Law, having seen this memorial, got the brothers sent back to Dauphiné. They were, however, recalled when the crisis came, and were of great use in endeavouring to bring some order out of the chaos which had ensued. Voltaire says that they acquitted themselves in carrying out these vast financial operations with marvellous talent. They rendered many other important services which it is not necessary to mention here, sufficient having been told to account for the wealth and position to which the brothers had now attained. Montmartel Paris, or Paris de Montmartel as he was called in 1722, was in that year appointed Custodian of the Royal Treasury. He then became Court Banker, and acquired so great an influence that it is said he determined the rates of interest on money, and was consulted in the selection of the Controllers General. He now purchased the estate and château of Brunoy as above mentioned, and was made Marquis of Brunov by Louis XV. in recognition of the services which he had rendered to the State. The new Marquis, who also held the titles of Count of Sampigny, Baron of Dagouville, and Lord of Brunoy; Villers in Normandy, Fourcy, Fontaine, Châteauneuf, &c., Counsellor of State, Keeper of the Royal Treasure, &c., next contracted an alliance with a noble family, obtaining the hand of Mlle. Marie Armande de Bethune, daughter of Louis, Count of Bethune, the only issue of which marriage was a son and heir, Armand Louis Joseph Paris de Montmartel, Marquis de Brunoy.

Born in 1748, the young Marquis passed his early years under

the eye of his mother, and surrounded by every luxury that money could procure. His education was acquired under the best masters, and he was skilled in all the varied accomplishments necessary to a young man of fashion and position. With these advantages, and possessing, besides, a handsome person and engaging manners, he was, at first, welcomed in society and favourably received at Court, where he appeared with an extravagance of surroundings in which few were able to rival him. His equipages and household appointments were the admiration of all, and for a short while he mingled in all those pleasures which his happy disposition and great wealth enabled him to enjoy. But in that most dissipated and roué Court of Louis XV. the tongue of scandal and envy was soon busy with his reputation. His personal character, it is true, was not assailed, but his new-born nobility furnished an admirable subject for galling remark and sarcastic innuendo.

In some way the shafts thus aimed at him seem really to have inflicted a deadly wound on the young man's heart. His character became totally changed, and this not gradually, but, as it were, in an instant. Perhaps he had too obtrusively or freely asserted his social equality with the young nobles around him, who resented the intrusion of one whom they chose to consider a parvenu. Certain it is that the impulse which suddenly actuated him and permanently influenced his short life was an absorbing desire and determination to degrade nobility in the eyes of the people by bringing ridicule upon it in his own person. In those days a terribly sharp line divided the two classes. He was by birth both noble and plebeian, and the nobles having, as he thought, declined to receive him as an equal, he, being one of the people, resolved, as a noble, to associate openly and flagrantly with the people, and thus, judged by the standard of those days, to cast a slur upon his order.

of the circumstance which directly evoked this suddenly adopted resolution we have no record, but it is certain that one afternoon he returned home in great agitation, tore off his gloves, trampled on his——hat, hurled his sword through a mirror, and, cursing the Court and all its belongings, summoned his attendants and commanded that everything—furniture, horses, carriages, &c.—should be sold instantly for whatever they would fetch; wrote to refuse all invitations which he had accepted and to cancel all those he had issued; caused the house to be put up for sale, and then hurried away. For two or three days at Paris and Versailles,

at banquets and at the opera, the world of fashion was languidly curious to know what had become of the gay Marquis de Brunoy;

then he was forgotten.

At Brunov now rough workmen are swarming on and about the château which Brunet had built, some engaged on the building itself, others laying the foundations of vast wings or tracing the outlines of spacious courtyards; and of all these workmen he who is the most ragged and the most jovial of boon companions is the Marquis himself. He is adding another storey to the château which had been large enough for two financiers. Everything now must be more spacious and magnificent. He will have parks and gardens, lakes and ponds, fountains and cascades, all on a scale of great grandeur. Day after day the work goes on without intermission except at noon, when the Marquis sits down among his fellow-labourers and eats his cabbage-soup. When the building is finished, there arrive armies of upholsterers bringing with them strings of waggons laden with costly furniture, carpets, tapestries, mirrors, &c. At length all is completed, and a superb palace has been erected fit for the immediate reception even of a king. Then the Marquis assembles his fellow-workmen around him and says: 'You have built this château, you shall live in it, it is yours.' They all think him mad, but he is in earnest. One he appoints his secretary, another his valet de chambre, and a third his attendant, whilst the very lowest labourers are made lackeys and household servants. Then telling them to go at once to Paris to be fitted with the liveries suited to their various positions, he says, 'And now let us drink together.'

His father having recently died, the Marquis de Brunoy resolved that the château, being now completed and the grounds laid out, should be inaugurated by several days of filial mourning; but he carried out the idea on a scale of exaggerated eccentricity which, while it attracted universal attention, could not fail to cast general ridicule upon his proceedings. Every member of his extensive household was clad in black serge from head to foot; the exterior of the château, from roof-tree to ground, was covered with a vast veil or pall of the same material; long black streamers waved mournfully from each branch of every tree in the gardens and parks; the statues were all draped in black; the waters of the canal which traversed the estate were of the same sable hue, and ink poured down the cascades and spouted from the shells and mouths of the tritons and dolphins in the fountains.

Madame de Montmartel was amazed and horrified when. having arrived at the château to condole with her son on the loss which he had sustained, she perceived all this lugubrious buffoonery, and saw the whole village similarly draped in black. She reproached him that his father's death had been hastened by his scandalous conduct in openly associating with labourers and workmen, whereby also he had disgraced the young nobility of France—a remark which drew a bitter smile to his lips. implored him in affectionate terms to remember her love for him and his duty to her, to remove all the absurd mockery of grief which was visible around them and which was only an insult to the dead, and to accompany her to Paris, where his presence was necessary for her protection, adding that she felt her own health was breaking and that her days were numbered. To all the reproaches, the tender remonstrances and pleadings of Madame de Montmartel, the young Marquis turned a deaf ear, and only when she spoke of her death did he break silence to inform her that when that sad event should take place nothing should be wanting to mark his sense of deep respect for her memory. Eight monks of the order of the Celestins should accompany the funeral cortège, which should be followed by eight of the order of Minims, and six each of four other orders. Sixty grand masses should be founded for her, and two hundred of the priesthood should officiate at the burial service, which should be illuminated by great wax candles of white, green, and yellow colour, forty of each, besides three hundred wax tapers. There should be three banners of violet velvet, three great curtains of black velvet for the three entrances of her parish, four banners embroidered with the family arms, rich caparisons for all the horses of the carriages which would follow, trailing mantles for all the mourners, a magnificent pall, and a gorgeous canopy superior to that used at the obsequies of the Regent of France, the Duke of Orleans. It should consist of twenty yards of cloth of gold with a triple fringe. Her heart should be cased in lead and preserved in an oaken coffin bound with iron, while Houdon should carve her a magnificent mausoleum adorned with statues, urns, lamps, and cypress trees. Madame de Montmartel, indignant at his treatment of her, quitted her son without waiting to hear more, and returned to Paris, declaring that she would never see him again. It may be mentioned here that at her death, which shortly afterwards occurred, the Marquis actually carried out the above programme

to the letter, exactly as he had sarcastically threatened, and the church at Brunoy was enriched by a magnificent mausoleum, where the remains of M. and Mme. Montmartel were deposited by their son.

Great was the astonishment of Paris when the news of the extraordinary doings at Brunoy reached the capital. The Marquis, then, had neither killed himself, nor gone to India, nor turned Trappist, as had been variously surmised, but, with a fortune of some forty million livres, was actually living in a village on terms of familiar intimacy with its six hundred clownish inhabitants! The aristocrats regarded his proceedings with mingled feelings of amazement and indignation, which afforded proportionate satisfaction to the Marquis.

At this time (1766) the Count de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., brother of Louis XVI., who had not yet ascended the throne, was the owner of Gros Bois, a fine estate in the neighbourhood of Brunoy. He was most eager to acquire this property, and spared neither entreaty, cajolery, nor menaces in his endeavours to obtain possession of it; but the Marquis positively refused to accede to his wishes, or to part with Brunoy under any circumstances. The result of his refusal will be presently shown.

The Marquis now constantly invited the labourers, cottagers, and artisans of the village to sumptuous entertainments, which were served in the grand salons of the château, and on one occasion, at the termination of one of these uproarious banquets, addressed them in a speech, telling them how he was reproached by the world for admitting his inferiors to too great familiarity, for sitting at table and drinking with them, and for many other similar offences against society. 'After all, however,' continued the Marquis, 'although I take a pride in effacing all difference between us, in order that we may be on a footing of equality, the fact nevertheless remains that you are only vinedressers, smiths, caskmakers, fowl-fatteners, and gamekeepers, and that I am the Marquis de Brunoy.'

'True, true,' cried the guests, eager not to give offence.

'Enough,' continued the Marquis, 'I know it; and in order to remove all ground for further reproach, I, who have turned peasant to be like you, and thereby offended those who insist on calling me marquis, am determined that you shall be marquises like me, and, what is more, marquises with marquisates, which is

more than many a marquis can say; for you shall each have a

portion of my marquisate of Brunoy.'

He accordingly then and there dubbed his guests by various ludicrous titles, and, after draining numerous bumpers in honour of the occasion, ordered suitable dresses, wigs, swords, ruffles, &c., to be at once provided from his own wardrobe for the use of the newly created nobles.

'And now, my friends,' said the Marquis de Brunoy, 'we will take the air, in order that all may know that you are marquises, and as such pay as much respect to you as to myself.' Whereupon eight chariots, each drawn by six horses, were made ready, and the Marquis and his noble guests, each in his own vehicle, were drawn in state through the narrow streets of the little town, the overdressed clowns looking, in their wigs and ruffles, like monstrous poodles of strange breed.

Intense was the admiration of the village; and the children, who thought they were the royal carriages, saluted the locksmith and the wheelwright, the caskmaker and the blacksmith, their fathers and uncles, with shrill cries of 'Vive le Roi!' For all this, however, the newly made marquises resumed their customary

occupations next morning.

On one occasion the Marquis dismissed a lodge-keeper and his daughters for refusing to sit at table with him, as they said, out of respect to him; declaring that the aristocracy of the lodge-keepers was not to be borne when that of the Marquis did not exist. 'I drink with my porter,' he said, 'so my lodge-keeper can eat with me.'

At another time, being thirsty in the morning, he told the coachman who was in the yard, grooming the horses, to go and fetch him some cream. The man refused, as it was not a part of his duty. 'And pray, my friend, what is your duty?' said the Marquis.

'To take charge of the horses, to harness them, and to drive

them,' replied the man.

'Good,' said the Marquis; 'then harness six horses to my carriage, take a servant with you, and let her bring me some cream. Every morning henceforth, without overstepping your duties, you will do this.'

Towards his friends the peasants the Marquis exercised the greatest politeness. On every fête-day, or whenever they were ill, he was sure to pay them a visit. The shroud for the dead, the linen for the baby, or the wedding gifts to the new bride, all were

provided at the expense of the château. When the saddler's wife died there was a grand funeral-catafalque, marble tomb, brass plate with full inscription, and the church draped in black; eight bells tolled for three days, and all the neighbouring villages tolled in response. It cost over 1,200l. to bury the saddler's wife. The absurd extravagance of such mourning was in its turn far exceeded by the expenses of some festivity. Maréchal and Séné were two of his confidants-the former, who was the son of the above-mentioned saddler, was his secretary; Séné had been a pavior. On the occasion of the marriage of the sisters of these worthies a grand feast was held at the château which lasted for eight days. Four acres of ground were covered with tables, and thirty-five casks of wine were consumed. Each bride had a marriage portion of 800l. and an outfit costing as much again, while the road to the church was covered with fine sand and adorned with garlands of flowers. At this time, also, the Marquis set apart one of the great salons of the château as a vast infirmary for all the poor people of the neighbourhood, and placed it under the charge of a physician. But this was a piece of unnecessary attention, for there were no poor near Brunoy, and therefore no The neighbourhood only suffered from a chronic condition of indigestion.

He was now nineteen years old, and his uncle, the Marquis of Bethune, a shrewd and clever man, who alone, of all the members of the family, appeared to have any influence over him, conceived the idea that, if only the youthful Marquis could be induced to marry, the fact that he would be united with a companion chosen from the best of the old nobility would put an end to his mad escapades and bring him back to the paths of order and honourable life. The Marquis received the proposals of his uncle with unexpected readiness. One by one he consented to abide by all the conditions proposed to him, and to make all the sacrifices demanded of him. He would break off his relations with the peasants, dismiss his ridiculous array of servants, return to Court, put a limit to his expenditure, and live in Paris. At last the Marquis de Bethune ventured with much circumspection to break the ice on the subject of Brunoy, urging upon his nephew the ruinous expenditure involved in properly maintaining so useless an incumbrance when he possessed so many other charming estates, and winding up by saying he trusted it was understood now that Brunoy should be sold.

'But who is there who could afford to buy it?' inquired his nephew. 'Besides,' he added, 'I should be broken-hearted at seeing my marquisate in the hands of some one who perhaps would not devote so much attention as I do to my peasants. It will seem like abandoning my family and children.'

'Reassure yourself on that point,' returned his uncle. 'It will be the Count de Provence himself who will be its purchaser, and he will pay whatever price you may ask for it.'

The young Marquis regarded his uncle fixedly, and briefly remarked, 'Be it so; I will marry whenever you like.'

That night there was a final orgie at the château of Brunoy. The Marquis entertained his friends and brothers the peasants and his household in one last grand feast. Red wine and maudlin tears both flowed copiously, and, in taking an affecting farewell of his guests, the Marquis produced a list of pensions and gratuities which he had prepared, whereby everybody, down to his scullery and stable boys, received large sums of money. Full details of the names, occupations, &c., of the fortunate recipients of his bounty, and the amount each received, have been preserved; but the particulars of this curious list are too long for insertion here.

On June 8, 1767, their Majesties signed the contract of marriage of Armand Louis Joseph Paris de Montmartel, Marquis de Brunoy, Secretary Counsellor of the King, House, and Crown of France and of its Finances, with Mlle. Emilie de Pérusse d'Escars, when one of the largest fortunes and one of the most illustrious names in France were united before the altar at Notre Dame. All Paris crowded to the wedding, the announcement of which had filled both city and Court with amazement. Every one believed that the Marquis had been saved from himself, and, if the marriage was not one of affection, how could that do otherwise than quickly grow between a bride of fifteen and a bridegroom of twenty, the one the embodiment of youth, innocence, and beauty, the daughter of a great and ancient house; the other without ancestral honours, it is true, but possessing in abundance that wealth which can supply so many joys and pleasures?

During the ceremony the graceful ease and polished manners of the young Marquis won him golden opinions, and it was admitted on all sides that if the family of d'Escars had accepted him in the face of the world as worthy to be united with its daughter, it would be impossible longer to dispute his right to the position

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of a well-born gentleman. The name of d'Escars was so great that it formed all the dower of the bride, to whom the Marquis engaged to give an annual allowance of 2,500l., a similar allowance for her maintenance, and 12,500l. at his death. He gave 20,000l. for her toilette, ornaments, and jewellery, while, besides other enormous allowances, he spent 30,000l. in diamonds and dresses as his wedding present. The fashionable world rang with his praises, and he was presented at Court by his mother-in-law, the Marquise d'Escars.

That same night the clashing of the church-bells of Brunoy roused the villagers from their slumbers, and told them either that a fire had broken out or that the Marquis must have unexpectedly returned. The latter event proved to be correct. There, surrounded by his half-awakened retainers, was the Marquis, still dressed in his rich wedding garments, laughing and shouting with glee at the fresh ridicule and indignity he had cast upon the nobility. They had opened their arms to him and received him with effusive congratulations; they had given him a fair and noble bride, and had wedded this daughter of a proud and ancient race to him, the grandson of an innkeeper, the son of a financier, ennobled only for his wealth; and he had rejected the bride. 'Rejoice with me,' he cried to the crowd, 'I am no longer Marquis de Brunoy, Secretary Counsellor of the King, House, and Crown of France, but your friend and neighbour, Nicholas Tuyan. Vive Nicholas Tuyan!'

When the excitement and confusion which his unexpected return had created had somewhat abated, he was informed by Séné the pavior, Thorel the carpenter, Chalandre the wheelwright, Maréchal the son of the saddler already mentioned, and a certain Abbé Bonnet, son of the barber of Brunoy, that during his absence some officials from the household of the Count de Provence had been to the château in order to make an inventory of its contents, as well of the parks, gardens, &c. As they had proceeded with all the necessary legal formalities used in carrying out some decree of the law courts, the inhabitants of Brunoy had of course imagined that the Marquis had authorised the sale in consequence of his marriage, and bitter, they said, had been the grief in the village.

The young Marquis perceived how difficult it would be to successfully resist the powerful influences brought against him to deprive him of his estate, especially as he knew that his own family were quite willing to give effect to the expressed wish of the Count de Provence to possess Brunoy. He, however, determined to resist to the uttermost all attempts to despoil him of his property, and after some consideration resolved to secure the favour and protection of the Church by lavish gifts. But, as usual with him, the expenditure he incurred was reckless and the result grotesque. He sent for the Abbé Bonnet above named, and amazed that worthy with the recital of his intentions in regard to the little church in the village. It should be enlarged and embellished in the most extravagant style, and furnished with everything necessary for holding cathedral service. He accordingly caused it to be provided with a peal of eight bells, sixteen chanters for the services, a large body of choristers and an organ, while twelve prebendaries were attached to the church as if it were a cathedral. The interior was gilt from the pretentious portico to the altar, and blocked up with two rows of columns. The walls were covered with clusters of golden apples, pomegranates, and grapes, and the pavement was laid in squares of white and rose-coloured marble. For use in the services of the church he caused to be provided great numbers of copes, chasubles, tunics, stoles, &c., and, for its illumination, nine lustres of Bohemian glass, thirty-six chandeliers, six great candelabras, each with seven branches, ninety copper candlesticks, and eight others of solid silver; while the altar was draped with a profusion of the richest laces and glittered with great numbers of vessels, ornaments, crosses, and massive lamps in gold, silver, and enamel. Later on was added a superb baldachino or canopy of hammered iron, the six branches of which were united above by a crown and surrounded below by open scrollwork of the most exquisite design and finish. An artist named Gerard had spent ten years over this superb work of art, which Louis XV. having seen, so much admired that he took it for his church at Choisy. He, however, declined to pay the sum of fifty thousand livres asked for it by Gerard, who at length regained possession of it; but, being unable to sell it, was obliged to exhibit it for a few pence to curious visitors, until the young Marquis heard of it and bought it for his church at Brunov.

Although the expense incurred in all this prodigality was something enormous, the Marquis gained the end he sought; for, however anxious the Count de Provence was to get possession of Brunoy, he recoiled before the idea of coming into conflict with the religious surroundings which the Marquis had gathered about

him. Brunoy therefore remained, at least for the present, in the hands of its owner, who was able to devote himself to the decoration of his church, which now shared, with the château and the Marquis, in rendering the village an object of mingled interest and amusement to Paris and the Court. He now altogether attached himself to the clergy, too numerous at this period, and thus too dependent, to be able to resist the bribes he gave to be allowed to take part in the services of the church. In priestly garb, therefore, he would appear now in the choir and then at the altar, constantly interfering with the duties of the curé, who, on his part, would scarcely have cared to change places with the Archbishop of With this passion for the church he also developed a curious predilection for all the lesser church functions connected with births, deaths, and marriages. He constituted himself general godfather to all the children born in the neighbourhood, and undertook the duties of gravedigger for the parish. In the depth of winter he might be seen draped in a cloak of coarse blackcloth, tramping through the snow, carrying to the cemetery, under his arm or over his shoulder, the body of some dead neighbour. He had epitaphs for cowherds engraved on marble, went into deep mourning for woodcutters, and would deliver a funeral oration proclaiming the virtues of some defunct knifegrinder. We can well imagine the eagerness with which the crowds of monks, Carmelites, and all the riff-raff overflow of the monasteries hastened to swoop down on such a rich prize as this. There was not a window at the château where might not be seen the shaven crown and bloated cheeks of some priest, while from morning to night the canticles of the Church might be heard mingling, in horrid confusion, with the chorus of some wild drinking-song.

The grief and annoyance which these new and extraordinary freaks caused to the family and relations of the infatuated young Marquis were excessive, and they came to the conclusion that he was out of his mind. Before, however, taking measures for having him confined as a lunatic, a step which was repugnant to them as being a slur upon their names, the families of Montmartel and Bethune agreed as to the advisability of getting rid of Brunoy, trusting that, once deprived of the marquisate, their nephew would have no field for the full display of his eccentricities; and, knowing the great desire of the Count de Provence to possess this property, they offered to cede it to him on condition that he would pay the debts of the Marquis, estimated at about 650,000%.

but the offer was declined. Being sure that, sooner or later, he should get possession of the marquisate, the Count de Provence offered through his steward, M. Cromot—not, however, with any expectation of its being accepted—to pay an insignificant rent for the estate on condition that he might be able to enjoy it during

his lifetime. His offer was at once accepted.

But now arose the question how the rights of the Marquis de Brunoy were to be set aside. Fool he may have been, extravagant, reckless, dissipated—worse; but still he was the legitimate owner of the estate. Under the circumstances the families deemed it expedient to leave the full responsibility of obtaining possession on the shoulders of the powerful Count de Provence, they on their part being content to maintain a perfectly passive attitude while the work of spoliation was being carried out. As to what should be done with the Marquis, it would be time enough to consider that question when he had been evicted. The

plot came to the knowledge of the Marquis.

July 17, 1772, was a red-letter day in the annals of the village of Brunov, for the Marquis, having expended immense sums in decorating his church and providing in superabundance all the requisites for the performance of religious services on a grand scale, had determined to celebrate the Fête Dieu with befitting splendour. It also afforded him another opportunity for casting ridicule upon the nobility. The Marquis had called in the aid of the chief decorator of the opera-house, his assistants, scene-painters, and machinists, and the appearance of the village had been so changed that it was unrecognisable. The thatched roofs of the lowly cottages were screened from view by immense painted canvases, representing elegant buildings several storeys high; while pasteboard trees with lustrous foliage lined the sides of the crooked little streets. A shower of rain would have reduced the whole to a horrible pulp; but a bright sun shone, every street and path was thickly strewn with fresh roses, and the whole presented the most poetic and picturesque theatrical tableau imaginable. For weeks past the ears of fashionable society had tingled with the accounts of the fabulous preparations which were being made, and on the great day not only all the beau monde of the capital, but the good folks of the country side, from far and wide, poured into the village. Perhaps, also, some of the popularity of the fête may have been due to the announcement that all comers would be the guests of the Marquis. On arriving they found

seats and couches set out for their repose at every point of vantage whence a view could be obtained. At every corner barbers and peruquiers were in attendance, ready immediately to repair all disorders to the toilettes and headdresses of the visitors; while, to slake their thirst, fifty hogsheads of wine of various sorts spouted from many fountains into the marble basins. Here and there, on all sides, stood enormous vases filled with sweetmeats, while immense quantities of sliced lemons and sugar had been thrown into three deep wells, thus providing cool lemonade in abundance for all comers. The Marquis himself, attired in a worn-out rusty suit of black, his hair flying wildly in the wind, was running about in all directions, at one moment pomading his guests at the corners of the streets, at another engaged in lighting up the church; then off to the great kitchens in the château or the small ones in the cottages, turning the spits, tasting the gravies and sauces and wines. Now he is in the belfry, making a horrible clamour amongst the bells, and then down in the church again 'priest-hunting.' He had, as has been said, provided an immense assortment of church vestments, and was now busy catching people to wear them. So soon, therefore, as any person passed into the church, attracted by the perfume of the incense, or impelled by curiosity to see what was going on, he was immediately collared by two stalwart attendants, a cope was thrown over his shoulders, and he was thrust into the ranks. By this means all the copes were soon provided with wearers, and at a given signal the procession set out from the church. The copewearers were formed in two lines, respectively called the 'cornflowers' and 'buttercups'-blue and yellow-which emblems they wore as distinguishing marks. A magnificent banner of St. Médard was borne in their front, while behind them came a number of footmen carrying lighted torches. To these succeeded peasants bearing candles, and the villagers clad in white, and then came the magnificent daïs in chased metalwork already mentioned, one of the silken cords of which was held by the Marquis himself, ecstatically dancing in time to the music, and shouting to the 'cornflowers' and 'buttercups' to keep in line. Presently his eye fell upon a group of solemn-looking clerks of the steward of the Count de Provence. He instantly pounced upon them, threw copes over their shoulders, thrust huge torches into their hands, and compelled them to take part in the procession, to their mingled confusion and wrath. The narrow streets were suffocat-

ingly hot; the pasteboard trees with their paper leaves and the tall painted canvas houses rustled and shrivelled and crackled in the fierce blaze of the sun; now and again a deluge of water was poured down upon some troublesome knot of spectators, and as the absurd procession shambled along the withered rose-leaves flew up in clouds and mingled with the heavy perfume from hundreds of incense-burners, making the air close and heavy as in a crowded theatre. When the 'faithful' at length returned to Brunov from their long tramp in the hot sun to the village of Périgny, they were, to use a mild expression, in a very disorganised condition. The visits to the fountains had been so frequent during the day that the cope-wearers continued to stagger and drop. All those that eventually succeeded in reaching the church at Brunov at once went to sleep on the pavements, cushions, and even on the steps of the altar; the voices, otherwise than nasal, of the choristers, were hushed; the musicians snored on their instruments and slept noisily. Presently the Marquis himself staggered into the church and found everybody snoring. He made an effort to preach, then tried to chant the Te Deum, then to snuff the candles, then to pronounce a blessing, in making which final effort he fell, snuffers in hand, headlong into the snoring mass before him, and went to sleep too. The 'Mémoires Secrets,' under date July 30, 1772, relate of this extraordinary celebration of the Fête Dieu that there were 25,000 vases of flowers set out, that the services of more than 150 priests for ten leagues round had been engaged, that more than 800 priests, cope-wearers, and peasants were sumptuously entertained, and that more than 500 carriages from Paris alone were seen at Brunoy on that day.

This procession, which attracted general attention not only in France but in other countries, decided the families of Bethune and d'Escars to demand from the legal tribunals that the Marquis should be dealt with as a lunatic. Then Brunoy would pass into

the hands of the Count de Provence.

On his part the Marquis was fully conscious of the anger of his family and of the deep offence which he had given to the nobility. He knew that a decree in lunacy would soon be put in force against him, and, resolving that his career should have an appropriate ending, he caused a proclamation to all faithful Christians to be issued, setting forth that he, the Marquis of Brunoy, &c. &c., was about to head a great crusade with the noble and pious object of conquering the Holy Land and rescuing the tomb of Christ from the hands of the infidel Mussulman. He therefore appealed to all men of religious feeling to take up arms and follow him, each person to receive a fixed salary and an annuity on his return from the crusade.

Those who did not look with ridicule upon this precious manifesto trooped in crowds to the château of Brunoy, where, whilst the arms were being furbished up and the gallant squadrons brought up to their full strength, the intending 'crusaders' swaggered about to their heart's content. There were scores of ruffianly Baldwins, sharping Tancreds, light-fingered Renauds and Adhemars escaped from the galleys, towards whom the chief of the police exhibited an animosity perfectly Saracenic; and the expedition finally collapsed when the King refused to grant passports to the crusaders, who, in the end, rescued no tomb of any sort, although they managed to fleece their employer of large sums of money at billiards.

The Marquis now deemed it expedient to pay a visit to England, and during his twenty-nine days' stay in that country spent 2,500l. The King, however, instructed the French Ambassador to send him back, and on September 15, 1772, he appeared before the civil lieutenant at the Châtelet, on which occasion all the members of the families related to him were present. The high rank of the parties concerned, and the celebrity which the Marquis had acquired by reason of his extraordinary mode of life and disastrous follies, invested the case with exceptional importance and interest. Long before the Marquis set out in his carriage on his way to the Châtelet the road was crowded with people eager with excitement, and every one was anxious to see whether there was truth in the rumour that he was gagged and wore a straitjacket. Ever since the condemnation of the youthful Chevalier de la Barre -who was executed, or rather murdered, on the scaffold at Abbeville on August 1, 1776, aged twenty—the tribunals and their secret sittings were under the ban of a general suspicion. The scandalous partiality of the judges had, at length, led people to the conclusion that to be accused was probably a proof of innocence; and a popular impression prevailed that the relatives of the Marquis had themselves encouraged him in his dissipations, in order to become possessed of his fortune and procure his seclusion as a lunatic. After all, a young man who had, with the assistance of a country priest, in a little town of eight hundred

inhabitants, run through nearly a million pounds sterling in six years, was a 'lion' worth looking at.

The interrogations which were put to the Marquis with a view to make him commit himself are too voluminous to record here.

He concluded his defence by remarking that he was to be treated as a lunatic, not because he had squandered his fortune, but because he still possessed real property to the value of nearly a million sterling. As he anticipated, the judges of the Châtelet passed a decree of lunacy against him, although it was certainly not justified by the replies which he had given when under examination. Although without much hope, he determined to appeal to the Parliament against this decision, when, by a miracle of justice, it was reversed, and the Marquis was left in the free enjoyment of his estates.

Great was the consternation of the relatives of the Marquis and loud the indignation of the nobility, while, on the other hand, the people were beside themselves with joy. They saw in him a hero, and they worshipped him, for he was one of themselves, a man of

the people, who had successfully affronted the nobility.

When he returned to Brunoy he was met at some distance from the village by a procession headed by crosses and banners, taken from his carriage, and borne in triumph to the château. On all sides he was welcomed as a brother by the people and as a

father by the children.

Brief, however, was to be the span of his triumph or of the joy of the people. The Count de Provence was wrathful at the obstacles which continued to prevent his gaining possession of Brunoy, daily growing more beautiful, while the relatives of the Marquis were irritated at the rebuff they had experienced; there was thus mutual sympathy between the two parties. The Marquis kept open house at Brunoy, and all comers were welcomed, so that there was nothing remarkable in certain new friends finding themselves among his visitors and leading him without much difficulty to drink to excess and in that condition to affix his signature to a deed whereby he ceded his estate of Brunoy to the Count de Provence.

The Marquis cried like a child on learning what he had done, and loudly protested against the legality of the deed, but his protests were disregarded—Brunoy was lost to him.

Under a 'lettre de cachet' the Marquis of Brunoy was seized at his château of Varise and taken to the Priory of Elmont, near Saint Germain en Laye, where he was confined as a lunatic. He was afterwards removed to another religious house at 'Les Loges,' in the forest of Saint Germain, where, on a fine evening in March 1781, he passed peacefully away, in the thirty-third year of his age, his last thoughts being engaged on the details of the splendid funeral which he was imagining for himself.

Had he lived but a few years more he would have seen his church, on which he had lavished so much money, pillaged and wrecked by infuriated mobs of that very peasantry which had professed so much affection for him. The château itself, with its magnificently decorated salons, its splendid paintings, its statues, terraces, gardens, parks, shady alleys, and marble flower vases, its splendid series of fountains and cascades, which are said to have been no mean rivals of those at Saint Cloud and Versailles, has altogether disappeared; and with the exception of one pavilion, the stables, and a few outbuildings, there is nothing remaining to mark the site of the noble residence once made famous by the follies of the now forgotten young Marquis of Brunoy.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

THE story is told of Theophrastus Bombastes Paracelsus, the alchemist, that he came to a fir-tree one day and heard a sighing and a muttering within. He put his ear to the bole and heard a demon inclosed in the tree praying for delivery. A spigot was driven into the side of the pine, whence turpentine had been drained. The demon promised the alchemist if he would free him that he would show him how to brew the golden elixir. Thereupon Paracelsus pulled out the spigot, the devil issued forth, and confided the secret to the alchemist. 'And now,' said the latter, 'confer on me another favour. I am puzzled beyond description to understand how such a mighty spirit as yourself could be confined in so small a place, and issue through so small a hole. Would you favour me with showing me how it came about? 'With all the pleasure in the world,' said the evil spirit. At once transforming itself into a spider, it crawled into the orifice. Immediately Paracelsus replaced the peg, and the devil remains confined in the pine-tree to this day.1

The Christmas pine contains no devil—something quite the contrary—the Spirit of Love; and when the tap of that spirit is

turned let us hope it will run all the year.

And now let us see what is the real origin of the Christmas

Tree.

The Christmas Tree is not properly a Christian tree at all, but a heathen one. It does not belong, by right, to any other European families than those of Germanic and Scandinavian origin. Kelts and Sclaves and Latins knew nothing of it, and if it has found its way into France and Italy, even into England, it is an importation. The Christmas Tree was certainly unknown to our forefathers. The writer remembers when his parents, who had spent many winters in Germany, first introduced it, some forty-five years ago, into England, what astonishment it created, what surprised delight it afforded. The relic of the Christmas tree with us is the ash-fagot. The Germans when they accepted Christianity brought the yule tree into their new religion, and gave it a new signification. The missionaries to the Anglo-

¹ P. Cassel, Literaturhist. Symbolik. Leipzig, 1884.

Saxons denounced it, and made every good Catholic hack the idolatrous symbol in pieces, and burn it at Christmas, in token that the Holy Child had destroyed heathenism. Among the Scandinavians, and probably among the Anglo-Saxons, the ash was the sacred tree. Yggdrasill, the world-tree, was, according to the Edda, an ash with three roots, one in heaven, one in hell, and one in earth. On the tree branches sat an eagle, along them ran a squirrel, and about its roots, gnawing into them, was coiled a great serpent. The serpent and the eagle are ever in strife, says the younger Edda, and the squirrel runs between them trying to make peace.

But probably the sacred tree among the Germans was a pine. Tacitus speaks in his annals of a temple that the Marsii, a mid-German race, called Tanfana, *i.e. fanum tance*, made to resemble the earth. Tanne is pine-tree, and the words of Tacitus have been supposed to refer to a sacred enclosure about a monstrous pine dedicated to the earth-goddess.

In one of the Wartburg Minnesinger's lays we have lines about the world-tree, long after its real meaning was lost:—

A gallant tree is growing high,
 A garden gay adorning.
 Its roots run down to hell below,
 Its crown to heaven above doth throw,
 Where God doth sit in golden glow;
 Its branches take the morning;
 Its branches spread the whole world through,
 Distilling manna, dropping dew,
 And birds thereon are singing.

Otfried, in the ninth century, sings of the Cross in similar strains, deriving his ideas from Yggdrasill, which he translates into the tree of life in the garden of the Church—the Cross. So also Alcuin, writing among the Franks, says of the Cross, 'Its position is such that the upper portion reaches the skies, the lower portion touches the earth, the root reaches to hell. Its branches extend to all parts of the earth.'

In the Edda is the story of Swipdag, who tries to get into the castle of Menglada, but is not suffered by the warder till he has answered the riddle, 'What is the name of the golden gleaming cock that sits on the tall tree?' He has no difficulty in answering this: the golden cock is the eagle in the world-tree. But then he finds before he can penetrate to the interior of Menglada that he must slay the golden bird, who is only vulnerable when touched

by Sinmara's wand, and Sinmara's wand is only accessible to him who has reached hold of the shining sickle. The sickle is, of course, the moon, and perhaps the rod is the lightning, and the myth contains some meteorological truth put in far less concise manner than the notices from the office in Victoria Street, Westminster.

The Germans from heathen times paid great veneration to certain trees: the great oak at Wetzlar, which St. Boniface hewed down, was dedicated to the thunder-god. In Catholic parts of Germany there are many sacred trees still, with images of the Blessed Virgin in them, no doubt thus consecrated and preserved from destruction.

According to the Scandinavian story, three divine maidens rested in the tree, sisters, but one went to sleep, and fell off into hell, where she sits weeping by the spring ever flowing there. This myth has been localised in several places where springs burst forth under old trees. A spectre woman is said to be seen there on dark nights in white, rocking herself, and wailing. Various are the legends that have been made to account for the apparition, which is really a survival of the Norse Hertha (Urthr in Norse), who is the same as the earth. This Hertha was specially worshipped in the Isle of Rugen, as Tacitus tells us, where was a sacred grove and a lake. Without doubt she had there her great tree stretching over the dark pool, and the tree was the local symbol of Yggdrasill, and the pool of the hell-spring.

But how came the lights on the Christmas tree?

In the ninth month of the Jewish year, corresponding nearly to our December, and on the twenty-fifth day, the Jews celebrated the Feast of Dedication of their Temple. It had been desecrated on that day by Antiochus; it was rededicated by Judas Maccabæus, and then, according to the Jewish legend, sufficient oil was found in the temple to last for the seven-branched candlestick for seven days, and it would have taken seven days to prepare new oil. Accordingly the Jews were wont on the twenty-fifth of Kisleu in every house to light a candle, on the next day two, and so on till on the seventh and last day of the feast seven candles twinkled in every house. It is not easy to fix the exact date of the Nativity, but it fell, most probably, on the last day of Kisleu, when every Jewish house in Bethlehem and Jerusalem was twinkling with lights. It is worthy of notice that the German name for Christmas is Weihnacht, the Night of Dedication, as

though it were associated with this feast. The Greeks also call Christmas the Feast of Lights; and indeed this was also a name given to the Dedication Festival, Chanuka, by the Jews.

In every house the seven-nozzled lamp, or seven-branched candlestick, symbolised the seven-branched candlestick in the Temple. This latter was, moreover, made like a tree, and each lamp was like a flower on the tree. Lightfoot thus condenses the description given of it in Exodus, 'The foot was gold, from which went up a shaft straight, which was the middle light. Near the foot was a golden dish wrought almondwise, and a little above that a golden knop, and above that a golden flower. Then two branches, one on each side, bowed, and coming up as high as the middle of the shaft. On each of them were three golden cups, placed almondwise in sharp scollop-shell fashion, above which was a golden knop, a golden flower, and the socket. Above the branches at the middle shaft was a golden boss, above which rose two shafts more: above the curving out of these was another boss and two more shafts, and then on the shaft upwards were three golden scollop-cups, a knop, and a flower; so that the heads of the branches stood at an equal height.' This is according to the representation of the candlestick on the Arch of Titus.

Many seven-branched candlesticks were in use in the German churches in the Middle Ages; the most magnificent that remains is one in the cathedral of Essen, dating from 1003, standing nearly nine feet high. Another is at Brunswick, standing fourteen and a half feet high. Many others exist. The writer saw a very beautiful ironwork stand of seven candles in Iceland, made in imitation of angelica leaves. He was told this was only lighted on Christmas Eve. In Milan is one of the thirteenth century, called the Tree of the Virgin, with four rivers represented as issuing from the base. Yggdrasill had but three. A superb tree of seven branches was presented to Canterbury in the twelfth century; another to Winchester by King Canute in 1035. Anthony Beck, bishop of Durham, bequeathed what seems to have been one of silver gilt, with an image of the Virgin and Child at the foot, to his cathedral. The Blessed Virgin takes the place of the Norse Hertha by the well or spring. A seven-branched candlestick remains at Lichfield, several remain in France, at Lyons, Angers, Tours, Vienne. They were placed at the entrance to the choir, and were certainly lighted at the midnight mass on Christmas Eve, as the Paschal Candle was lighted at Easter.

In old calendars Adam and Eve are commemorated on Christmas Eve; their symbol was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: the next day is the Day of Christ, whose symbol is the Tree of Life, or the Cross-so, when the minds of men were escaping from paganism, the tree of the old mythology got associated with the Nativity, and again with the Cross, and the lights of the Dedication Festival of the Jews were put to adorn the sacred tree, and even the seven-branched candlestick, as a figure of that tree, was introduced into the churches. The old miracle plays helped this identification. The Christmas mysteries began with the Fall, and so the tree was associated in the ideas of the people with the Nativity. The mystic tree represented on Assyrian sculptures has reference to some myth connected with the world-tree, and the fir-cone held by the gods and heroes is the fruit of immortality growing aloft in heaven, where expand the branches of that tree.

There has been much variety of opinion as to what the world-tree's nature is. It is evergreen, that is, Nature never dies, and so it is generally represented as an olive or a pomegranate, a figtree, an evergreen oak, or a pine. Before the temple of Upsala was a holm oak, to which sacrifices were offered. The early Italian masters painted the Madonna under a fig-tree; later painters give an apple-tree instead. Old English carols speak of a cherry-tree:—

Said Mary to the cherry tree, 'Come bow to my knee, And I'll pluck thy cherries off, Some one, two, and three.'

There is a well-known Madonna of Raphael in which she is represented giving cherries to the Divine Child. That the tree is an apple-tree became a popular theory when it was confused with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, or, in short, with the Tree of Death.

To account for a statue of the Virgin and Child, with the latter holding an apple, a legend was made that St. Herman Joseph when a child was given an apple, and as he saw the statue with extended hand, and was desirous to make an offering, he put his apple into the hand of the Holy Child, which closed on it. But the apple again is the round world, the orb, and Christ holds it as king. In the village of Schleutz, near Stendal, is a remarkable statue. The mother has the child on her arm, and the

Saviour is represented as holding a red apple in his hand, which he is about to bite. It is the custom in the place for the smith of the village every year to carry three red apples on Christmas Eve to the pastor at Lüderitz.

The stars and planets are the shining fruit hanging amid the branches of the world-tree, therefore on the Christmas pine gilt nuts and apples must be hung. The place of the old eagle is taken by an angel or a dove—we have seen both, not together, sometimes one, sometimes the other.

In parts of Germany, when at evening the clouds rise and bear some resemblance to a great tree—that is, when there is, as it were, a pillar of vapour between the horizon and the overarching canopy of cloud, the peasants call it 'Abraham's tree,' or 'Adam's tree.' A mackerel sky provokes the saying, 'We shall have wind, Adam's tree is putting forth leaves.' If the leaves appear in the afternoon it is a sign of fine weather; if early in the morning, of storm. The serpent who gnaws the roots of the Yggdrasill seeks the destruction of the universe. When the roots are eaten through the tree will fall over, the end of all things has come. The representation so common of the serpent at the foot of the Cross was of course of Christian signification, but it came into Christian iconography quite as much from the early identification of the Cross with the world-tree of heathen mythology. The old English maypole is the same tree, bursting into beauty and foliage in spring. As our Anglo-Saxon forefathers regarded, with the Norsemen, the ash as the world-tree, and the ash is deciduous, they kept the festival of its restoration to vitality. The Germans took the evergreen silver fir as the symbol of the ever-living tree of the world's life. Yet they also kept some festival analogous to our May-day. On Palm Sunday, in Catholic parts of Germany—we have seen it in the Black Forest people carry poles wreathed with flowers, and fluttering with coloured ribands, to church and have them blessed, and then set them up against the gables of their houses, a sure protection against lightning and fire.

Just as the world's life is bound up with the life of the tree that sustains it, so, according to innumerable stories, are the lives of men bound up with certain plants. Destroy the plant, and the man dies. The planting of a young tree on the birth of a child, so common in Germany, attaches to the same idea. When the tree dies, so does the child. The writer well remembers the

terror it caused him, when he was about fifteen years old, when a pine planted on his birthday died. He made sure it was a token that he would follow.

According to other versions—now general in the West of England—the life of a man depends on a candle; when that burns out he dies. The writer knows of two churches, one in Devonshire, the other in Cornwall, in the walls of which candles are said to be hidden by anxious husbands, who suspect their wives are eager to get rid of them. The candle, as already seen, is closely allied to the tree. In one Devonshire church every vault that has been opened has disclosed a candle stuck against the wall in it. In Yorkshire the writer was told by old people that they remember when a candle was put in every coffin. There also the village grocer sends each of his customers a candle at Christmas.

The German name for a pine, tanne, comes from a root which signifies to grow, to extend vertically and laterally, that crops up in all the Aryan languages. Tan is to stretch out in Sanskrit; in old Norse teina, or tanna, is to grow and spread. In old Gothic tain is a branch. The name, therefore, of the pine is such as is suitable to a symbol of the Tree of Life.

The following well-known German Volkslied is curious as bringing into one the symbols which are united in the Yggdrasill—the tree, the maid, the bird, the spring. The old shapes are there associated together, but their meaning is lost, and they are given one altogether new, and belonging to a different order of ideas. 'O Tannenbaum!'

O pine-tree green, O pine-tree green! Thy foliage fadeth never; Green in the summer heat, and seen. As green in snowy weather.

O maiden fair, O maiden fair! How fickle is thy favour! Thou swearest truth—I need beware Of moods that shift and waver.

The nightingale upon the bough
Sits in the summer singing;
When winter comes is hush'd, I trow,
And far away is winging.

The fountain flows, and flowing shows
A changeful portrait ever:
It ebbs away when heaven glows,
And floods in winter weather.

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